

Gatehouse Nursery

Service Name

Gatehouse Nursery

Service address

Gatehouse Primary School
Gatehouse of Fleet
DG7 2JX

Type of care service

Day Care of Children

Provider name

Dumfries & Galloway Council

Service number

CS2003015482

Date of inspection

04/12/2006

Type of inspection

Unannounced

Care Commission Office

Galloway House
Crichton Business Park
Bankend Road
Dumfries
DG1 4ZZ

Period since last inspection

15 months

Introduction

Gatehouse Primary School Nursery Class has been registered to provide sessional day care of children since April 2002. It is based within a portacabin in the grounds of the Gatehouse Primary School.

The nursery is registered to provide care to a maximum of 20 children aged from 3 years upwards to those not yet attending primary school.

The service aims to provide children with opportunities for learning in a safe and stimulating environment.

Basis of Report

Before the visit:

The nursery completed and returned the following documents;
annual return document containing information about the service
a self evaluation form.

Parents/guardians returned 5 questionnaires giving their views of the service.

During the visit which took place on Monday 4 December 2006 Care Commission Officers Angela Bradford and Dorothy Thomson spoke with:

- The Manager
- 2 members of staff
- Children
- Parents/carers

The Care Commission Officers also looked at a range of policies, procedures and records including the following:

- Monitoring documentation
- Correspondence with parents, e.g. notice board information
- Complaints procedure
- Child protection policy

and spent time observing how staff members worked with the children.

The Care Commission Officers took all of the above into account and reported on whether the service was meeting the following National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:

Standard 3	Health and well-being
Standard 4	Engaging with children
Standard 7	A caring environment
Standard 10	Involving other services
Standard 12	Confidence in staff

Not all of the elements of each standard were covered during this inspection visit.

The Officer also took account of the Care Commission's themes for the 2006-2007 inspecting year: Child Protection, Nutrition, the Scottish Executive's "Birth to Three" document and Safer Recruitment.

Action taken on requirements in last Inspection Report

There were no requirements identified during last year's annual inspection.

Comment on Self-Evaluation

The self-evaluation of the nursery provided evidence of good practice within the nursery. Some areas for development had been identified by staff.

Views of Service Users

Observations of and discussion with the children present during the inspection formed an integral part of the assessment. Children were seen to be happy and content in the nursery. They were confident in speaking to adults and were enjoying the play opportunities provided.

Views of Carers

Information obtained from the parental questionnaires and those parents spoken to confirm that most parents were very happy with the service provided by the nursery. They found staff "approachable and friendly". Some parents' statements included "children are treated fairly and staff interact incredibly well with the children". "My child loves coming to nursery and I am extremely satisfied with the staff". "A recent parent evening showed good knowledge of my child". Those parents spoke to "felt their comments or concerns are taken account of".

National Care Standards

National Care Standard Number 3: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 – Health and Wellbeing

Strengths

There was good communication between staff, children and parents. Children were forming friendships with each other and were confident in approaching adults. They were seen to settle quickly into their day routine. Information relating to the service was being displayed.

A School and Nursery website was available to parents. This included information relating to the service's policies and procedures and the nursery handbook.

The service's child protection policy was available to parents. Staff had completed child protection training. The nursery teacher has a good understanding of her role and responsibilities in protecting children for harm, bullying and neglect. Staff were responsive and dealt well with children's conflicts. They were seen to implement good behaviour management procedures which gave consideration to the sensitive needs of those children involved. Staff encouraged children to take responsibilities for their own actions.

Children had opportunities to learn about hygiene, diet, personal safety. Children were shown how to use and were caringly supported when using step ladders for decorating the Christmas tree.

Pictorial information was displayed in the toilets to encourage good hand washing procedures. Staff made frequent references to healthy eating and good hygiene practices throughout the observed session. A child said they 'clean their hands before snack to get rid of germs'.

A snack menu was displayed for staff and parents to read. Children's likes and dislikes had been taken into consideration when planning the menu. Children routinely washed their hands before preparing and eating snack. They were included in the preparation of the snack. During snack time staff interacted effectively; praise and encouragement were given. Children were confident in pouring their milk and water and requesting more servings. Children had time to relax and enjoy their snack and socialise with their peers. The nursery teacher had completed training in Adventures in Foodland.

Weather permitting children had access to an adjacent outdoor playspace. The school hall was available 4 days per week for physical energetic play. At the time of inspection children and staff used the school hall. Children participated well in this activity.

The comfortable reading area had a variety of topic books displayed. This area was well used by children and staff.

Areas for development

At the time of the inspection the manager and nursery staff confirmed that they were not aware if the service had a copy of the Nutritional Guidance for early year's food choices for children aged 1-5 years. It was recommended that they obtain a copy of the Nutritional guidance for early years. Once obtained staff should familiarise themselves with the document and where areas of development are identified it would be the best practice to implement these. (see recommendation 1)

Observations made during children's departure time highlighted where staff and parents had limited opportunities to communicate and discuss the child's day at nursery. It was recommended to review the departure procedure and increase opportunities for staff to have further communication with parents at the end of the day's session. (see recommendation 2)

Staff had previously completed child protection training. The nursery teacher requested that all nursery staff have the opportunity to review their child protection training. (see recommendation 3)

The Nursery Teacher stated that the nursery did not currently participate in the national tooth brushing scheme. The Head Teacher and Nursery Teacher stated that they were unaware if they had a copy of the Standards for Nursery and School Tooth Brushing Programmes 2006 document. Staff had had the opportunity to discuss tooth brushing with the agency implementing the Standards and children had been involved in a tooth brushing puppet activity. It was recommended that staff make themselves familiar with the Standards for Nursery and School Tooth Brushing Programmes 2006 document. As best practice guidance staff should risk assess the proposed tooth brushing procedure prior to implementing. (see recommendation 4)

During the inspection visit children used bars of soap to clean their hands. It was recommended that the nursery provide liquid soap to enhance hygiene standards in the nursery. (see recommendation 5)

The children had access to a long low level sink in the nursery room. The nursery teacher informed that due to a broken water heater system, the following hand washing procedure is used prior to offering snack; children wash their hands in a bowl of warm water placed in the low level sink. As discussed with the nursery teacher the hand washing procedure should be reviewed to ensure there are good hygiene practices in line with the infection control guidance for Nurseries, Playgroups and other child Care Settings document. (see recommendation 6)

The following recommendation from last year's annual inspection is currently outstanding; "the nursery installs an adequate fire warning system which interlinks with the school premises. This device should be acceptable to the Dumfries and Galloway Fire and Rescue Department". No action had been taken within the last year to address this recommendation.

The Care Commission officer stated that she shall write to the Fire and Rescue Department outlining the outstanding recommendation.

The Fire and Rescue department had recently visited the school. However, there was no confirmation from the Nursery Staff or Head Teacher as to whether the nursery premises were included in the Fire and Rescue Inspection Visit.

As best practice guidance the nursery should provide more detail on the evacuation procedure as to where the nursery evacuation assembly point can be located.

National Care Standard Number 4 : Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 – engaging with children

Strengths

Staff had a good understanding of children's development and were effective in supporting their learning. The nursery teacher was in the process of collating information and introducing Personal learning Plan folders (PLPs) for each child.

Staff were seen to build children's confidence, listen to them and support self help skills and encourage them to complete tasks.

Staff interacted well with the children and made good use of questions to extend children's learning opportunities. Staff responded to children with praise and encouragement. All children were valued as individuals and they were treated with respect.

Children were confident in approaching adults. They were motivated in their play and were having fun. They were encouraged to share and be considerate of the needs and feelings of others.

Areas for development:

As discussed with the Nursery Teacher it was recommended that staff continue to develop Children's Personal Learning Plans. (PLPs) (see recommendation 7)

Staff were aware of the Birth to Three document. As best practice guidance they should now familiarise themselves with the principles. Where areas of development are identified it would be best practice to implement procedures to support the development, care and welfare of the children.

Due to the staff's work commitments outwith the nursery planning time is limited. Staff confirmed that time was short for planning. Best practice guidance would be to allocate additional time for planning.

A new member of staff had not had the opportunity to be properly inducted. Best practice guidance would be for new staff to familiarise themselves with documentation relating to the nursery children's individual needs, abilities and developments. New staff should have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the service's policies and procedures. Best practice guidance would be to allocate time to ensure an effective induction programme is in place for new members of staff.

National Care Standard 7 : Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 – A Caring Environment

Strengths

Staff provided a caring and safe environment for the children in their care. Children were observed to be happy and content in their surroundings. They were familiar with the routines of the nursery.

There was a clear code of behaviour which respected children and parents as individuals. Children were praised and they were encouraged to be considerate and sensitive to others.

Parents were happy with the nursery and found staff to be 'very approachable' and felt that their beliefs were respected and taken into account. An observation made indicated where a person other than the parent collected the child a system was in place to safeguard that child.

Most parents stated that "where there were concerns they felt confident that staff would deal with the issue in a sensitive and effective manner". A complaints policy was available,

Parents had on-line access to the nursery handbook and the services policies and procedures. A paper copy of the handbook is given to parents when enrolling their child with the nursery. The service's aims and objectives were displayed on the parent's notice board.

Parent evenings had been planned. The child's report was given to the parent prior to the event. Staff had established positive working relationships with most parents. Where staff wished to speak to parents who do not collect their child from nursery, an effective system was in place to inform them of the child's day at nursery. A parent stated that "if there were any issues she was confident that the nursery teacher would contact her that day".

The Speech and Language assistant and the Nursery Teacher were seen to liaise and have an effective discussion to support the development of the child. Staff encouraged children to take books home to support the development of speech.

Areas for development

As discussed with the manager and nursery teacher; it would be beneficial to parents to display the following information on the parent's notice board; the services's Complaint Procedure, Parent's Handbook and information relating to how parents could access the on-line nursery information which included the service's policies and procedures.

National Care Standard Number 10 : Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 – Involving other Services

Strengths

The nursery had developed good links with other childcare services, schools and agencies such as Health and Social Work. Staff were seen to work with the Speech and Language Therapist and parent to support the child's development.

There were arrangements in place to support children's transition from nursery to primary.

Staff participated in training opportunities and attended cluster meetings with their manager.

Areas for development:

To continue to work effectively with partnership organisations.

National Care Standard Number 12 : Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 – Confidence in Staff

Strengths

The nursery is provided by Dumfries and Galloway Council. Staff were aware of the registration requirements for the Scottish Social Services Council.

Staff numbers complied with the adult:child ratios, as detailed in Annex A of the National Care Standards.

Staff met for half an hour each week over lunch to discuss children's development and the work of the nursery. The Head Teacher and staff met every 3 weeks to discuss the operations of the service, health and safety issues, training, and children's development.

Staff had implemented their Continuation Personal Development portfolios (CPD). There were opportunities for staff to request and attend training events.

The manager had recently implemented a purposeful monitoring system for the work of the nursery. An effective recording document had been devised. Staff had been given a copy of the completed document which they had used to reflect their work practice.

Areas for development:

Staff met regularly to discuss children's development, the work of the service and to develop it in line with best practice. However, due to staff commitments outwith the nursery, planning time is limited. Staff confirmed that time was short for planning. Best practice guidance would be to allocate additional time for planning.

Staff were seen to be effective in their work and individually staff ensured that the needs of the children were provided for. There was limited evidence of team work.

Staff stated that time constraints limit the opportunity to build effective working relationships. As discussed with the manager and nursery staff; further opportunities should be given to staff to develop good team working relationships. It would be best practice for the manager and staff to review how best to develop and enhance team working relationships.

An audit of Dumfries and Galloway Council's safer recruitment policies and procedures has been carried out by the Care Commission resulting in one requirement and two recommendations highlighted in the report. See Areas for Development below.

The organisation must employ a system to record that the applicant's skills, experience and qualifications as reported on the application have been checked. SSSC Codes of Practice – Employer, SSI 2002/114 Regulation 9 (2) (a) Records. (See requirement 1)

“The organisation should develop a recording system to record that the employer has checked professional registers for all applicants to care service posts. SSSC Codes of Practice – 1.2, SSI 2002/114 Regulation 9 (2) (c) Fitness of employees and Regulation 19 (2) (d) Check criminal records and relevant registers. (See recommendation 8)

It is recommended that best practice is followed by ensuring that references obtained for staff are not destroyed after a given period, but retained in staff files for the duration of staff's employment. (see recommendation 9)

It would be good practice to recheck Enhanced Disclosure Scotland Checks for all care service staff every 3-5 years. National Care Standards, SSSC-Employer.

Staff had implemented (CPD) Continual Professional Development portfolios. These should continue to be developed in particular to the March 2007 registration with the Scottish Social Services Council.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this service by the Care Commission.

Other information

None identified during the inspection.

Requirements

A requirement is a statement setting out an enforceable action required of a service provided in order that the service comply with current legislation, usually within a specific timescale.

Requirement 1. The organisation must employ a system to record that the applicant's skills, experience and qualifications as reported on the application form have been

checked. SSSC Codes of Practice – Employer, SS1 2002/114 Regulation 9 (2) (a) Records.

Recommendations

A recommendation is a statement setting out proposed actions to be taken by the service provider aimed at improving the quality of service (based on good practice and professional judgement) but which would not be subject to enforcement action if not actioned.

Recommendation 1. To obtain a copy of the Nutritional guidelines for early years food choices for children aged 1-5 years. National Care Standards early years and child care up to the age of 16. Standard 3.3 Health and wellbeing.

Recommendation 2. To review the departure procedure and increase opportunities for staff to have further communication with parents at the end of the day's session. National Care Standards early years and child care up to the age of 16. Standard 3.1 Health and wellbeing.

Recommendation 3. Staff to review their child protection training within the next year. National Care Standards early years and child care up to the age of 16. Standard 3.2 Health and wellbeing.

Recommendation 4. Staff should make themselves familiar with the Standards for Nursery and School Tooth Brushing Programmes 2006 document. National Care Standards early years and the child care up to the age of 16. Standard 3.3 Health and Wellbeing.

Recommendation 5. The nursery should provide liquid soap to enhance hygiene standards in the nursery. National Care Standards early years and child care up to the age 16. Standard 3.3 Health and Wellbeing.

Recommendation 6. The hand washing procedure should be reviewed to ensure there are good hygiene practices in line with the infection control guidance. National Care Standards early years and child care up to the age of 16. Standard 3.3 Health and wellbeing.

Recommendation 7. Staff should continue to develop the Children's Personal Learning Plans. National Care Standards early years and child care up to the age of 16. Standard 4.4 Engaging with children.

Recommendation 8. The organisation should develop a recording system to records that the employer has checked professional registers for all applicants to care service posts. SSSC Codes of Practice – 1.2, SSI 2002/114 Regulation 9 (2) (c) Fitness of Employees & Regulation 19 (2) (d) Check criminal records and relevant registers.

Recommendation 9. References obtained for staff are not destroyed after a given period, but retained in staff files for the duration of staff's employment. National Care Standards early education and child care up to the age of 16. Standard 12.1 Confidence in staff.

This report was written by Angela Bradford, Care Commission Officer,
14/12/2006