

# Almond Park Nursery Day Care of Children

10-12 Macbeth Moir Road  
Musselburgh  
EH21 8JE

Telephone: 0131 665 4136

Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 23 November 2016

**Service provided by:**  
The Almond Park Nursery Ltd

**Service provider number:**  
SP2014012251

**Care service number:**  
CS2014323811

## About the service

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information in relation to all care services is available on our website at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com). The service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 23 July 2014 and applied to change their registration on 22 June 2015. The service increased their numbers from 55 to 88 children in this variation which was approved by the Care Inspectorate.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC), Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with the services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting it Right for Every Child: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

Almond Park Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 88 children at any one time aged from three months to not yet attending primary school, of whom no more than 20 are under two years. The nursery is comprised of three playrooms as well as an activity space and separate staff area in the lower level. Playrooms are equipped to offer provision for the following age groups:

- Buttercup Room: 0 months to 18 months
- Daisy Room: 18 months to 3 years
- Bluebell Room: 3 years to not yet attending primary school.

Two separated outdoor spaces are available for children of all ages. The nursery is located in a residential area of Musselburgh close to local amenities such as shops, parks and the local primary school.

The service stated that their aims and objectives are:

"To be at the forefront of childcare in East Lothian. We are committed to providing the highest quality early learning and childcare helping to ensure your child gets the best start in life."

## What people told us

We visited the service on Tuesday 22 and Wednesday 23 November 2016. Two Care Inspectorate early years inspectors were present. We spoke with the director, staff, parents and children who were present at the time of the inspection.

We observed children who were happy, content and confident in their environment. The youngest children enjoyed cuddles with their keyworkers, showing the nurturing relationships they had with each other. Older children played with each other and were confident in their environment. They told us:

"I like to play with paint."

"Some people aren't tidy."

"I like to play with the dinosaurs."

"I like playing with spaghetti."

"We are going to the lagoons."

We spoke with parents while visiting the service who were happy with the staff team and the level of care provided. One parent told us:

"I feel my child is developing well. We get lots more information about their development."

We received 20 Care Standards Questionnaires before our inspection from families using the service. Almost all parents were very happy with all aspects of the service that were being provided. Their comments included:

"I am very happy with Almond Park Nursery. I feel confident that my child is happy and meeting each developmental goal. The staff have supported my child through a difficult stage and made us feel welcome from the start."

"I am extremely happy with the service provided at Almond Park Nursery. My (child) absolutely loves it and adores all (their) carers."

"I couldn't recommend this nursery enough. They are excellent with my (child) and I'm always kept up to date with (their) daily activities and achievements. Brilliant nursery and excellent staff."

"I am extremely happy with the care my children receive at Almond Park. They are both eager to come in the mornings, talk about staff and children and, on occasions, do not want to leave! Staff are enthusiastic and approachable and I know they know my children."

"The staff are fantastic and I have seen a huge improvement in his development."

"My child absolutely loves nursery and all the staff that work with (them). (My child) has always been happy and excited to go into the nursery which makes me feel confident that they create a loving, safe environment."

"My child has flourished in the nursery, increasing in confidence both socially and academically. The staff in the nursery know my child well and take a keen interest in (them) personally, talking about the things that (they) like."

We received comments about communication and transitions and looked at this throughout this inspection. Comments on our findings are within this report.

## Self assessment

The service submitted a self assessment to the Care Inspectorate and this had been completed in a thorough and systematic way. They had detailed their achievements and areas for improvement which were in line with our own findings. This could be further developed by taking more account of the wellbeing indicators and GIRFEC.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

<b>Quality of care and support</b>	4 - Good
<b>Quality of environment</b>	4 - Good
<b>Quality of staffing</b>	4 - Good
<b>Quality of management and leadership</b>	4 - Good

## Quality of care and support

### Findings from the inspection

We found that the service was operating to a good standard under this statement.

Children were cared for by staff who were responsive to their needs and understood how to support their individual development. We observed nurturing relationships between staff and children throughout and this helped children feel safe and respected in the service. Staff were well informed about individuals and had good systems in place to ensure children were kept safe and healthy. We spoke about how formal systems for identifying plans to support children could be reviewed and developed. The service told us that they were currently reviewing this system with the support of the local authority.

Children experienced play which was based on their current interests and there was a focus on early language and communication throughout the service. This helped children to achieve and make their views known. Staff were skilled at recognising non verbal cues to support children's emotional wellbeing. We spoke about how this could further developed, for example, the use of baby signing and enriching the use of symbols in the environment.

Children's 'Learning Stories' showed the progress children were making in the service and we saw some meaningful observations within these. We discussed how these could be further developed to show significant learning, achievements and how parents have been involved in their child's development.

Staff planned experiences which met the needs of most children and this had been developed in line with recent best practice guidance. Children had access to a range of experiences which helped them to develop skills such as sharing, taking turns and developing friendships. This supported them to feel included and responsible. We discussed how these experiences could be enriched through increasing children's levels of independence and allowing them to make meaningful decisions in the service.

Children's transitions were well planned and based on children's stage of development rather than only taking account of their age. Transitions were discussed with families to help them feel included in the choices made about their child.

Families told us that they were very happy with the care provided and they felt included in the service. The use of the 'Family' app meant that parents were kept informed of their own child's activities throughout the day, which helped them feel respected and included. Regular communication through the app helped to ensure all families knew about recent developments in the nursery as well as up and coming events.

We observed the sleep routines for children. We found that staff were settling children in a nurturing way and at times which suited the children. While children were supported to sleep, practices were not yet in line with guidance produced by the Scottish Cot Death Trust. We discussed the use of buggies for sleeping as well as other safer sleeping arrangements. This guidance is available at <http://www.scottishcotdeathtrust.org/skyblucms/resources/early-years-guide-31.08.15.pdf>.

We found that staffing routines and deployment met the basic needs of children. During lunchtime and other tasks such as getting ready to go outside, children's play was interrupted. We have made a recommendation to review staff routines and deployment. See recommendation one.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 2

1. We recommend that the service review routines for staff to ensure children's needs are met effectively throughout the day. In order to achieve this, the service should consider:

- increasing levels of staff at lunchtime
- staggering routines to reduce the number of children needing direct care, for example, at lunchtime and getting ready to go outside
- decreasing the amount of time children are not engaged in play
- introducing a more flexible routine for children to make further choices about their own play and care needs
- increasing the amount of choice children have to play indoors and outdoors.

This will ensure children are achieving and feel respected in the service.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Statement 5 - Quality of Experience

2. Lunchtime should be an enjoyable and sociable experience for all children. In order to meet the needs of the younger children the service should review the lunchtime procedures.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 Standard 3 - Health and Wellbeing and Standard 4 - Engaging with Children.

**Grade:** 4 - good

## Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

We found that the service was operating to a good standard under this statement.

Children had access to a rich and engaging outdoor play area which had been developed with families, staff and children using the service. The team had used best practice guidance and visits to other services to help them develop this area. We noted that there were opportunities for open ended play which stimulated children's curiosity and creativity. Children played happily in the well planned and safe outdoor play space which also allowed them to be active and try out risky play experiences. Children had developed an understanding of how to keep themselves safe as a result of this. Staff were actively encouraging children to explore their capabilities and make responsible decisions about their own safety.

Play risk assessments were in place which showed the benefits of children's play experiences. This had allowed staff to reflect on their practice in a meaningful way and they were able to talk to children about the risks identified in these. We saw staff discussing risk with children, showing the impact this approach had on their practice.

In the last inspection, it was identified that accidents and incident reporting was to be reviewed. During the inspection, we advised the service how to best document any further actions taken as a result of an accident. We were happy that the service was recording accidents appropriately.

We observed children accessing the local community and children had regular opportunities to visit the local parks and shops in the area. This helped them to develop a sense of community and their role as responsible members of their locality. We saw that staff planned outings to support children's development and build on their current interests.

The indoor environment was being developed to support child led play. We discussed ways that the service could further improve the environment and resources, for example, introducing more loose parts. Large wooden blocks would help children to be more creative in their play and achieve. We also spoke about creating further smaller, comfortable spaces for children to relax. Displays could also be further developed to celebrate children's work and create a more engaging play environment. Building on the natural, real life resources available would also help children to be more creative and develop a respect for nature.

Staff were aware of infection control procedures to keep children healthy and followed these during routine care needs and mealtimes. We spoke about the need for staff to be vigilant throughout play experiences, for example, ensuring children had clean noses and good handwashing routines after being outside. This is also linked to the recommendation about routines in care and support. Staggering direct care would allow staff to be more flexible in their approach. This will ensure children are kept healthy.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 4 - good

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

We found that the service was operating to a good standard under this statement.

Staff were committed, dedicated and very willing to support the improvement of the service. They cared for children to the best of their ability and there was a sense of warmth throughout. One of the aims of the service was to create a learning organisation and we found that this was a core value for all of the team. Staff engaged regularly with best practice documents and were beginning to use these to reflect on their own skills and abilities. We discussed delegating further responsibilities across the team to help them feel further included and responsible for the development of the service. This would help children to achieve with the support of 'experts' in play and development.

Staff who had recently joined the organisation had been recruited in line with best practice guidance. We advised that the service develop a system to track all actions taken throughout the recruitment process, including references and checking professional registration. Staff were offered a clear and concise induction programme which covered basic policies such as social media usage as well as practice issues such as observations and planning. Staff were offered a wide range of training opportunities which helped to enhance children's experiences. Recent work on play risk assessments had a very positive impact on keeping children safe.

Staff were aware of their responsibilities to maintain their registration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). They completed their development record regularly and were supported by management to meet the requirements of SSSC. This record was discussed at regular support meetings which staff told us helped them feel included and respected. We discussed that this system for appraisals could be further developed by using the Continuous Learning Framework (<http://www.continuouslearningframework.com/>) as well as the Step Into Leadership programme (<http://www.stepintoleadership.info/>). This would help staff to identify core skills that they wish to develop as professionals in social care.

The positive culture and high morale of staff made the service welcoming for all. Children felt safe, included and respected in their care and their commitment to the service was clear. They wanted the best for the children they cared for and we saw they were supported to achieve this by the provider.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 4 - good

## Quality of management and leadership

### Findings from the inspection

We found that the service was operating to a good standard under this statement.

The management team were visible and available to support staff and children throughout our visit. Staff and families confirmed that they felt confident that management were available if and when required. The service had a clear vision for the care they wanted to provide and this was shared with families through the aims and objectives.

Recent additions to the management structure had helped the service to identify areas for improvement more effectively and support staff to achieve this. Systems for reviewing the quality of the service were being shared between management to ensure a clear focus for improvement was identified. Most recently, the indoor environment had been reviewed using Building the Ambition, Scotland's best practice guidance on early learning and childcare.

The staff team all contributed to the service development and we spoke about how this could be more formalised using a child and staff led approach to monitoring and evaluating the service. The service had started to use targeted approaches to consult with families and this meant parents felt included in a meaningful way.

The development and review of policies was well structured and involved everyone in the service. While systems were in place to review the quality of the service, these could be further developed to identify clear priorities which are focussed on outcomes for children. We also discussed how to use a variety of methods to achieve this. See recommendation one.

In order for children and families to feel more included and respected, care plan reviews could be more reflective of children's development. Parents' views on their child's development should be recorded effectively to ensure there is a clear, shared plan to help each child progress. Using the wellbeing indicators to structure discussions will help information be shared meaningfully.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 1

1. We recommend that the service further develop quality assurance systems to have clear priorities which are focussed on outcomes for children. This should include:

- a concise monitoring calendar, linked to routine monitoring and service priorities
- use of the national priorities outlined in the National Improvement Framework (<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00491758.pdf>)
- use of 'Building the Ambition' to assess quality and plan improvements (<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00458455.pdf>)
- use of 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' to evaluate the service against national standards (<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/frwk1hgioearlyyears.aspx>)
- use of various observation types to monitor practice
- delegated monitoring tasks to engage staff in monitoring and evaluation
- continuation of the best practice discussion groups with a clear focus on set priorities
- involvement of children and families in evaluating the service
- recognition of staff's key strengths and areas of interest to develop the service
- clear evidence of progress made against priorities identified, for example, in improving literacy progress with the support of 'Ready to Read', a literacy support resource ([http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/Ready\\_to\\_Read\\_Scotland1.pdf](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/Ready_to_Read_Scotland1.pdf)).

Referring to websites such as the Care Inspectorate Hub (<http://hub.careinspectorate.com/>) and Education Scotland's National Improvement Hub (<https://education.gov.scot/improvement>) will also support the service to see recent examples of guidance in practice.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 14: Well-Managed Service

**Grade:** 4 - good



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

### Previous requirements

#### Requirement 1

In order to safeguard children the provider must follow safe recruitment practices at all times for all staff working in the service, including agency staff. This includes performing necessary checks prior to a candidate beginning to work in the service and obtaining references.

This is to comply with SSI 2011/210 9(2)(b) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 Fitness of Employees

Timescale: from receipt of this report.

**This requirement was made on 18 August 2015.**

#### Action taken on previous requirement

We found that the service had updated their safer recruitment policy in line with best practice and had made necessary checks for all staff currently employed. We were confident that the manager was being vigilant about recruitment checks and recommended that, in order to track this efficiently, a safer recruitment checklist could be added to staff files. We also discussed that the policy and procedure would need to be reviewed further in line with the new 'Safer Recruitment through Better Recruitment' (2016) document which has been written by the Scottish Social Services Council and the Care Inspectorate. We found that the service had met this requirement.

**Met - within timescales**

#### Requirement 2

In order to effectively assess the quality of the service and to plan effective improvements the provider must develop a robust system of quality assurance. Attention should be paid to the environment, safe recruitment practices, breadth and depth of children's experiences, storage and administration of medication and self evaluation. This will continue to improve outcomes for children.

This is to comply with :

SSI 2011/210 4(1)(a) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 Welfare of users - A provider must make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users.

Timescale - within 4 months of receipt of this report.

**This requirement was made on 18 August 2015.**

## Action taken on previous requirement

The service had developed a system to assess the quality of the service through observations of practice by senior management. Audits were in place to check routine aspects of the service such as medication, safer recruitment and the safety of the environment. The service held regular best practice meetings with staff to discuss self evaluation and use relevant guidance to review their service as a team. They had also engaged with support offered from the local authority to assess and plan improvements. Although further development of the quality assurance system was still required, we found that sufficient progress had been made to meet this requirement. We have made a recommendation about these systems in this report.

**Met - within timescales**

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

### Previous recommendations

#### Recommendation 1

In order to ensure that children's medication is stored and administered safely the manager should continue to implement improvements made to the storage of medication and systems for managing this in line with best practice guidance. This should include developing a system to audit the medication held in the service. National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 Standard 3 - Health and Wellbeing.

**This recommendation was made on 18 August 2015.**

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

We found that the service had put a monthly audit in place to check medication on the premises as well as the care plans which accompany medication. The care plans in place for long term medication were reviewed at least six monthly and this was discussed with parents. The medication we checked on the premises was stored safely and administered in line with best practice guidance. This recommendation has therefore been met.

#### Recommendation 2

In order to ensure that the garden area is suitable for children the service should develop a system to check it before children go out to play each time.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 Standard 2 - A Safe Environment.

**This recommendation was made on 18 August 2015.**

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

The service had developed a daily checklist for the outdoor areas. We saw that staff used these and that the area was safe. In addition to this, staff had attended risk benefit training to help them develop outdoor play experiences. We observed that this had a positive impact on children and their wellbeing. This recommendation has therefore been met.

### Recommendation 3

Children should have access to a range of play opportunities at all times. In order to achieve this and improve outcomes for the younger children the service should make full use of the space in the room.  
National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 Standard 2 - A Safe Environment and Standard 11 - Access to Resources.

**This recommendation was made on 18 August 2015.**

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

Children had access to the outdoors daily and a range of experiences indoors including sand and water play, play with natural materials and sensory experiences. We noted that the children made use of all the areas of their rooms and that staff were developing the environment and experiences regularly. This recommendation has been met.

### Recommendation 4

Lunchtime should be an enjoyable and sociable experience for all children. In order to meet the needs of the younger children the service should review the lunchtime procedures.  
National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 Standard 3 - Health and Wellbeing and Standard 4 - Engaging with Children.

**This recommendation was made on 18 August 2015.**

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

We observed the lunchtime procedures in each of the three rooms over the inspection. We found that children's needs were met, however, the level of staffing was not sufficient to ensure children had meaningful social experiences at lunchtime. We discussed how staff deployment could be amended to better meet children's needs. We also spoke about increasing children's levels of independence at lunchtime to make it more enjoyable. This could include allowing children choice over when they eat to reduce the number of children being fed at any given time, further individualising their experience in nursery. This recommendation has not yet been met and has been continued in this inspection.

### Recommendation 5

Children should have access to experiences which offer them sufficient breadth, depth and challenge in their learning. In order to achieve this, once new resources have been purchased for the older children, the manager should then look to improve the level of challenge and depth of children's experiences.  
National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 Standard 4 - Engaging with children and Standard 11- Access to resources.

**This recommendation was made on 18 August 2015.**

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

We found that the service had made sufficient progress to meet this recommendation. Children had access to experiences which offered them real life and relevant opportunities, providing breadth and depth. Resources were being added to regularly and the level of natural resources was having a positive impact on children's access to challenging play. The service were using loose parts to encourage children to be creative and had plans to improve this aspect of the service.

## Recommendation 6

Children should have regular access to outdoors to extend their learning, play and promote wellbeing. In order to achieve this the manager should review the outdoor experience for children and ensure all children, including the youngest children, have regular access to the outdoors.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 Standard 3 - Health and Wellbeing and Standard 5 - Quality of Experience.

**This recommendation was made on 18 August 2015.**

### Action taken on previous recommendation

During the inspection, children had access to outdoor play experiences regularly, including playing in the nursery garden and a visit to the local community. Children who attended part time were included in this and staff were mindful of the equality of children having outdoor play experiences. The service had also developed the outdoor space of the nursery in line with best practice guidance. This recommendation has therefore been met.

## Recommendation 7

The provider should amend the service's processes for reviewing, updating and issuing policies and procedures. Specifically, the provider should make sure that no old policies and procedures remain in circulation once a revised procedure is in place. Also, all staff including administrators should be made aware of the implementation of new and revised policies and procedures.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 14 - Well-managed service.

**This recommendation was made on 19 September 2016.**

### Action taken on previous recommendation

We found that the management team had introduced a system for policy review each month. They had created an archive for the management team and admin staff to keep old policies and only the most recent policy was available for parents. All staff were given new policies to read and signed to say they knew about the new policy. Parents were also informed of new policies through the 'Family' app. This recommendation has been met.

## Recommendation 8

The provider should review and amend the complaints procedure to make it more equitable and robust. Specifically it should always give complainants an alternative to putting complaints in writing, and should always give detailed reasons for a complaint outcome.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 14 - Well-managed service.

**This recommendation was made on 19 September 2016.**

### Action taken on previous recommendation

We reviewed the new complaints policy which was submitted to the lead inspector before the inspection process began. The service had made changes in line with the recommendation and we suggested some further improvements which were completed before we left the service. This recommendation has therefore been met.

## Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website ([www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

## Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
17 Jun 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	3 - Adequate
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate

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Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

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