

Inspection report

Almondbank & Pitcairngreen Playgroup Day Care of Children

Old School House
Pitcairngreen
Almondbank
PH1 3LR
07759 840107

Inspected by: Audrey Donnan
(Care Commission officer)

Type of inspection: Unannounced

Inspection completed on: 27 August 2010

	Page Number
Summary of this inspection report	3
Section 1: Introduction	
About the Care Commission	5
About the National Care Standards	6
What is inspection?	7
How we decided what to inspect	9
What is grading?	10
About the service we inspected?	11
How we inspected this service	12
Section 2: The inspection	15
Section 3: Other information	
Other Information	20
Summary of Grades	21
Terms we use in our reports and what they mean	22
How you can use this report	24
People who use care services, their relatives and carers	24

Service provided by:

Almondbank & Pitcairngreen Playgroup

Service provider number:

SP2003002142

Care service number:

CS2003010085

Contact details for the Care Commission officer who inspected this service:

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Easy read summary of this inspection report

There is a six point grading scale. Each of the Quality Themes we inspected, is graded using the following scale:

We can choose from six grades:

 **6**  **5**  **4**  **3**  **2**  **1**
excellent very good good adequate weak unsatisfactory

We gave the service these grades

Quality of Care and Support  **5** **Very Good**

Quality of Environment N/A

Quality of Staffing N/A

Quality of Management and Leadership  **5** **Very Good**

This inspection report and grades are our assessment of the quality of how the service is performing in the areas we examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection due to other regulatory activity; for example, if we have to take enforcement action to improve the service, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

What the service does well

The service had worked hard to build good relationships with children and their families and has good communication with the local community.

What the service could do better

The service was currently reviewing the methods used to assess and evaluate children's learning experiences.

What the service has done since the last inspection

The service had relocated to Glenalmond College while essential work was carried out on the registered premises. The service used the relocation to review their resources and the layout of the playroom.

Conclusion

The playgroup provided a flexible service in a welcoming environment to children and their families. Children could explore and develop their learning through a variety of activities.

Who did this inspection

Lead Care Commission Officer

Audrey Donnan

Other Care Commission Officers

N/A

Lay Assessor

N/A

Please read all of this report so that you can understand the full findings of this inspection.

About the Care Commission

We were set up in April 2002 to regulate and improve care services in Scotland.

Regulation involves:

- registering new services
- inspecting services
- investigating complaints
- taking enforcement action, when necessary, to improve care services.

We regulate around 15,000 services each year. Many are childminders, children's daycare services such as nurseries, and care home services. We regulate many other kinds of services, ranging from nurse agencies to independent healthcare such as hospices and private hospitals.

We regulate services for the very young right through to those for the very old. Our work can, therefore, affect the lives of most people in Scotland.

All our work is about improving the quality of care services.

We produce thousands of inspection reports every year; all are published on our website: www.carecommission.com. Reports include any complaints we investigate and improvements that we ask services to make.

The "Care services" area of our website also:

- allows you to search for information, such as reports, about the services we regulate
- has information for the people and organisations who provide care services
- has guidance on looking for and using care services in Scotland.

You can also get in touch with us if you would like more detailed information.

About the National Care Standards

The National Care Standards (NCS) set out the standards that people who use care services in Scotland should expect. The aim is to make sure that you receive the same high quality of service no matter where you live.

Different types of service have different National Care Standards. When we inspect a care service we take into account the National Care Standards that the service should provide.

The Scottish Government publishes copies of the National Care Standards online at: www.scotland.gov.uk

You can get printed copies free from:

Booksource
50 Cambuslang Road
Cambuslang Investment Park
Glasgow
G32 8NB
Tel: 0845 370 0067
Fax: 0845 370 0068
Email: scottishgovernment@booksource.net

What is inspection?

Our inspectors, known as Care Commission Officers (CCOs), check care services regularly to make sure that they are meeting the needs of the people in their care.

One of the ways we check on services is to carry out inspections. We may turn up without telling the service's staff in advance. This is so we can see how good the care is on a normal day. We inspect some types of services more often than others.

When we inspect a service, typically we:

- talk to people who use the service, their carers and families, staff and managers
- talk to individuals and groups
- have a good look around and check what quality of care is being provided
- look at the activities happening on the day
- examine things like records and files, if we need to
- find out if people get choices, such as food, choosing a key worker and controlling their own spending money.

We also use lay assessors during some inspections. These are volunteers who have used care services or have helped to care for someone who has used care services.

We write out an inspection report after gathering the information. The report describes how things are and whether anything needs to change.

Our work must reflect the following laws and guidelines:

- the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001
- regulations made under this Act
- the National Care Standards, which set out standards of care that people should be able to expect to receive from a care service.

This means that when we register or inspect a service we make sure it meets the requirements of the 2001 Act. We also take into account the National Care Standards that apply to it.

If we find a service is not meeting these standards, the 2001 Act gives us powers that require the service to improve.

Recommendations, requirements and complaints

If we are concerned about some aspect of a service, or think it could do more to improve its service, we may make a requirement or recommendation.

- A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions the care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service but where failure to do so will not directly result in enforcement.
- A requirement is a statement which sets out what is required of a care service to comply with the Act and Regulations or Orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration. Where there are breaches of the Regulations, Orders or conditions, a requirement must be made. Requirements are legally enforceable at the discretion of the Care Commission.

Complaints: We have a complaints procedure for dealing with any complaint about a registered care service (or about us). Anyone can raise a concern with us - people using the service, their family and friends, carers and staff.

We investigate all complaints. Depending on how complex it is, a complaint may be:

- upheld - where we agree there is a problem to be resolved
- not upheld - where we don't find a problem
- partially upheld - where we agree with some elements of the complaint but not all of them.

How we decided what to inspect

Why we have different levels of inspection

We target our inspections. This means we spend less time with services we are satisfied are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care. We call these low-intensity inspections. Services where there is more concern receive more intense inspections. We call these medium or high intensity inspections.

How we decide the level of inspection

When planning an inspection, our inspectors, or Care Commission Officers (CCOs) carefully assess how intensively each service needs to be inspected. They do this by considering issues such as:

- complaints
- changes to how the service provides care
- any notifications the service has given us, such as the absence of a manager
- what action the service has taken in response to requirements we have made.

The CCO will also consider how the service responded to situations and issues: for example how it deals with complaints, or notifies us about incidents such as the death of someone using the service.

Our inspections take account of:

- areas of care that we are particularly interested in (these are called Inspection Focus Areas)
- the National Care Standards that the service should be providing
- recommendations and requirements that we made in earlier inspections
- any complaints and other regulatory activity, such as enforcement actions we have taken to improve the service.

What is grading?

We grade each service under Quality Themes which for most services are:

- **Quality of Care and Support:** how the service meets the needs of each individual in its care
- **Quality of Environment:** the environment within the service (for example, is the service clean, is it set out well, is it easy to access by people who use wheelchairs?);
- **Quality of Staffing:** the quality of the care staff, including their qualifications and training
- **Quality of Management and Leadership:** how the service is managed and how it develops to meet the needs of the people it cares for
- **Quality of Information:** this is how the service looks after information and manages record keeping safely.

Each of the Quality Themes has a number of Quality Statements in it, which we grade.

We grade each heading as follows:

6	5	4	3	2	1
excellent	very good	good	adequate	weak	unsatisfactory

We do not give one overall grade.

How grading works.

Services assess themselves using guidance that we given them. Our inspectors take this into account when they inspect and grade the service. We have the final say on grading.

The Quality Themes for this service type are explained in section 2 The Inspection.

About the service we inspected

Almondbank and Pitcairngreen Playgroup was registered with the Care Commission in April 2002.

Almondbank and Pitcairngreen Playgroup provide a care service to a maximum of 24 children at any one time for children aged two years six months to those not yet attending primary school. From August 2010 until November 2010, the service will operate from Cairnies, Glenalmond College, Glenalmond, Perthshire, PH1 3RY.

Children and parents access the playgroup through a secure door. There is an area for children to hang their coats and change their shoes. Children have access to a large playroom with a door into a kitchen. Toilets are located down a corridor from the playroom. There is an enclosed grassed garden area and children can enjoy walks around the grounds.

The service aims include to provide a safe environment where children can develop intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, physically and creatively at their own pace.

Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

Quality of Care and Support	5 - Very Good
Quality of Environment	N/A
Quality of Staffing	N/A
Quality of Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good

This inspection report and grades are our assessment of the quality of how the service is performing in the areas we examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection due to other regulatory activity; for example, if we have to take enforcement action to improve the service, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

You can use the "Care services" area of our website (www.carecommission.com) to find the most up-to-date grades for this service.

How we inspected this service

What level of inspection did we make this service

In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections when we are satisfied that services are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care.

What activities did we undertake during the inspection

Evidence was gathered from various sources including:

Discussion with staff

Discussion with children

Observation of the premises inside and outside

Notice boards

A review of policies, procedures and other documentation including:

Children's files

Mind maps

Talking and Thinking books

Planning and Evaluations

Registration certificate

Insurance certificate

Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)

Each year we identify an area, or areas, we want to focus on during our inspections. We still inspect all the normal areas of a care service; these are extra checks we make for a specific reason.

For 2010/11 we will focus on:

- Quality assurance for care at home and combined care at home and housing support services.

You can find out more about these from our website www.carecommission.com.

Fire safety issues

The Care Commission no longer reports on matters of fire safety as part of its regulatory function. Where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant Fire and Rescue service to their existence in order that it may act as it considers appropriate. Care service providers can find more information about their legal responsibilities in this area at: www.infoscotland.com/firelaw

The annual return

We use annual returns (ARs) to:

- make sure we have up-to-date, accurate information about care services; and
- decide how we will inspect services.

By law every registered care service must send us an annual return and provide us with the information we have requested. The relevant law is the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001, Section 25(1). These forms must be returned to us between 6 January and 15 February.

Annual Return Received

Yes - Electronic

Comments on Self Assessment

The service submitted a completed self assessment document which gave relevant information for each of the Quality Themes and Statements. The service highlighted their strengths and areas for development.

Taking the views of people using the care service into account

There were eleven children present during the inspection. All children were happy, confident and enjoying a variety of activities indoors and outdoors.

Taking carers' views into account

The Care Commission received eight Care Standard Questionnaires from parents who use the service. Three parents strongly agreed and five parents agreed with the statement that overall they were happy with the quality of care and support provided within the service.

Comments included:

"The playgroup is excellent, and I feel should be a prototype for others. The staff work above and beyond the call of duty to make it such a professional and outstanding establishment"

"The service provided is outstanding and my child even wants to go at weekends! The "Blether Bags" provided for pre schooler's are excellent and my child enjoys doing them at home"

"I would love to know how they get on day to day but understand this would be a nightmare, a little more feedback from committee would be nice. On the whole I would not send my children anywhere else. They are happy and the staff have a wonderful relationship with the children. Although the venue is small that can't be helped, the playroom is cosy and has a homely feel to it."

"The service is good overall. However, the staff ask parent helper's to move hot cups of tea / coffee through the playroom where the children are playing / running."

Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service.

Service Strengths

Children and parents had very good opportunities to participate in assessing and improving the quality of care and support provided by the service.

The service was run by a committee of parents who were elected each year at the Annual General Meeting. Parents were informed of any changes to the committee through the service's website and newsletters. Parents could raise any issues or concerns with committee members at any time and issues were discussed at regular committee meetings.

Parents were encouraged to be part of the parent rota. Parents who were helpers had the opportunity to talk to staff and play with their child for a session. Parent helpers were asked to complete an evaluation of their sessions. The parent helper we spoke to on the day of the inspection, said staff were available to talk to at any time and that staff listened to any issues or concerns and where possible would make changes.

All staff were available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of each session. Parents could raise any issues or concerns and make suggestions for improvements.

The service had a website which kept parents up to date with any changes to the service and general information.

Parents were asked to complete evaluations about the service annually. The information gathered was fed back to parents through the service's website and newsletters. Any issues raised were addressed and where relevant changes were made. Evaluations for activity bags and welcome packs were also issued.

Children's views, ideas and comments were gathered through group discussions and talking and thinking books. The information collected was used to plan future activities and the playroom.

Children completed questionnaires about the service. The information was gathered and staff talked to the children about the results.

The service had recently introduced "What do I think?" with the children. Children were

encouraged to put a happy or sad face stamp beside the snack for the day. The information was used to plan future snack menus. The service planned to introduce this way of getting feedback from children in other areas of the playroom.

Areas for Improvement

We discussed with the service continuing to build on their very good practice of encouraging parents and children to assess and improve the service.

Grade awarded for this statement

5 - Very Good

Number of requirements

0

Number of recommendations

0

Statement 2

We enable service users to make individual choices and ensure that every service user can be supported to achieve their potential.

Service Strengths

Children had a variety of activities to choose from which extended their learning. Children were confident and comfortable when talking to staff and were supported and encouraged by staff. Staff responded to children's questions and requests for toys and activities. Staff were warm and caring when talking to the children. During the inspection, children were busy with a variety of activities and were encouraged to be kind to one another. We saw children helping each other and assisting younger children with activities.

There was some evidence that children's ideas and questions were gathered through discussion and Talking and Thinking books. Children's ideas and questions were used to plan activities and the playroom. Staff asked questions such as "What do we think?" and "What do we see?" to encourage children to develop their learning.

Children had access to an enclosed outside area. There were a selection of toys and equipment to encourage children to take part in physical play. We saw children going for a walk through the grounds of Glenalmond College. Children were encouraged to participate in outdoor play daily, weather permitting.

Staff kept written observations of the children and identified next steps to extend their learning. Children had folders with samples of their work and photographs. The folders were easily accessible to parents and children.

Areas for Improvement

We saw staff serving the children at snack time. We discussed with the service encouraging the children to be independent, for example, being provided with opportunities to serve themselves at snack time. We discussed using photographs of the toys on shelves to assist children with choice.

Grade awarded for this statement

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 5 - Very Good

Statement 1

We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the management and leadership of the service.

Service Strengths

Parents and children had very good opportunities to assess and improve the quality of the management and leadership of the service.

Children were asked to suggest questions they would like to ask a new manager. The questions were asked when interviewing potential managers for the service.

The service is operated by a committee of parents. Members of the committee interviewed potential managers for the service.

Parents were informed of the new manager's appointment through a newsletter.

Children were given an opportunity to take part in a question and answer session with the manager who was retiring from the service and the new manager.

Parents elect new committee members during the Annual General Meeting each year. Parents were kept informed of new committee members and changes to the committee through newsletters and the service's website.

Areas for Improvement

We discussed with the service continuing to develop the opportunities provided to encourage children and parents to assess and improve the management and leadership of the service.

Grade awarded for this statement

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Statement 2

We involve our workforce in determining the direction and future objectives of the service.

Service Strengths

We saw staff working well as a team and sharing information about the children to ensure they were meeting the needs of each child.

Staff had monthly planning meetings. Staff said they could contribute to the agenda for the meetings and they were given opportunities to discuss any issues or concerns. Staff told us they could make suggestions for developments to the children's learning and were given the opportunity to take the ideas forward. The manager attended a monthly meeting with the committee members. Issues or concerns raised by parents could be discussed during the meetings. Staff received minutes from the meetings.

Staff were given an appraisal every year. This gave staff opportunities to talk about their practice and highlight areas for development. Staff training relevant to their post was identified during the appraisal and staff attended training regularly.

Areas for Improvement

We discussed with the service developing individual responsibilities for staff. Staff could be encouraged to chair staff meetings and contribute more to the agendas.

Grade awarded for this statement

5 - Very Good

Number of Requirements

0

Number of Recommendations

0

Other Information

Complaints

A complaint was upheld in June 2010. There were three elements to the complaint. Two were upheld and a requirement and a recommendation were made.

Requirement: The provider must ensure children have access to milk or water at all times they are receiving a service.

Recommendation: The provider should ensure arrangements to support children are in place. For example, if a trial period is introduced in agreement with parents or carers then the period should run its course and be evaluated at the end unless a valid reason arises for the trial period to end.

Enforcements

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

Additional Information

No additional information noted.

Action Plan

Failure to submit an appropriate action plan within the required timescale, including any agreed extension, where requirements and recommendations have been made, will result in the Care Commission re-grading the Quality Statement within the Management and Leadership Theme as unsatisfactory (1). This will result in the Quality Theme for Management and Leadership being re-graded as Unsatisfactory (1).

Summary of Grades

Quality of Care and Support - 5 - Very Good	
Statement 1	5 - Very Good
Statement 2	5 - Very Good
Quality of Environment - Not Assessed	
Quality of Staffing - Not Assessed	
Quality of Management and Leadership - 5 - Very Good	
Statement 1	5 - Very Good
Statement 2	5 - Very Good

Inspection and Grading History

Date	Type	Gradings
20 May 2009	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very Good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 5 - Very Good Management and Leadership 5 - Very Good

Terms we use in our report and what they mean

Action Plan - When we inspect a service, or investigate a complaint and the inspection report highlights an area for improvement; either through recommendations or requirements, the action plan sets out the actions the service will take in response.

Best practice statements/guidelines - This describes practices that have been shown to work best and to be achievable in specific areas of care. They are intended to guide practice and promote a consistent and cohesive approach to care.

Care Service - A service that provides care and is registered with us.

Complaints - We have a complaints procedure for dealing with any complaint about a registered care service or about us. Anyone can raise a concern with us - people using the service, their family and friends, carers and staff.

We investigate all complaints which can have more than one outcome. Depending on how complex the complaint is, the outcomes can be:

- upheld - where we agree there is a problem to be resolved
- not upheld - where we don't find a problem
- partially upheld - where we agree with some elements of the complaint but not all of them.

Enforcement - To protect people who use care services, the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 gives the Care Commission powers to enforce the law. This means we can vary or impose new conditions of registration, which may restrict how a service operates. We can also serve an improvement notice on a service provider to make them improve their service within a set timescale. If they do not make these improvements we could issue a cancellation notice and cancel their registration.

Disclosure Scotland- Disclosure Scotland provides an accurate and responsive disclosure service to enhance security, public safety and protect the vulnerable in society. There are three types or levels of disclosure (i.e. criminal record check) available from Disclosure Scotland; basic, standard and enhanced. An enhanced check is required for people whose work regularly involves caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children or adults at risk; or to register for child minding, day care and to act as foster parents or carers.

Participation - This describes processes that allow individuals and groups to develop and agree programmes, policy and procedures.

Personal Plan - This is a plan of how support and care will be provided. The plan is agreed between the person using the service (or their representative, or both of them) and the service provider. It is sometimes called a care plan mostly by local authorities or health boards when they commission care for people.

How you can use this report

Our inspection reports give care services detailed information about what they are doing well and not so well. We want them to use our reports to improve the services they provide if they need to.

Care services should share our inspection reports with the people who use their service, their families and carers. They can do this in many ways, for example by discussing with them what they plan to do next or by making sure our report is easily available.

People who use care services, their relatives and carers

We encourage you to read this report and hope that you find the information helpful when making a decision on whether or not to use the care service we have inspected. If you, or a family member or friend, are already using a care service, it is important that you know we have inspected that service and what we found. You may find it helpful to read previous inspection reports about his service.

The Care Commission

We use the information we gather from all our inspections to report to Scottish Ministers on how well Scotland's care services are performing. This information helps us to influence important changes they may make about how care services are provided.

Reader Information

This inspection report is published by the Care Commission. It is for use by the general public. You can get more copies of this report and others by downloading it from our website www.carecommission.com or by telephoning 0845 603 0890.

Translations and alternative formats

This publication is available in other formats and other languages on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

ہے بایں تسد یم رونا بز رگی د روا رولکش رگی د رپ شرازگ تعاشا ہی

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

یہ آغا لبو تا قیسن تب بلطلا دن ع رفاوتم روشن مل اذہ

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.

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Improving care in Scotland