

Nursery staff did not show empathy to children report says

Nursery staff have come under fire for describing children as ‘kicking off’ and being ‘riled up’ during a visit from Care Inspectors.

Hopefield Castle Nursery, in Bonnyrigg, received two ‘weak’ grades following the visit for its leadership and care of youngsters as well as being ordered to introduce changes.

During the unannounced visit to the nursery the inspector raised concerns about medication, including prescribed creams, being stored in a cabinet “without clear reasons” as well as outdated plans.

And they said a high number of children attending the nursery were aged four and five but some were being cared for in a room designed for the younger two and three-year-old children with no changes made to resources to meet their needs.

They said despite staff being told to allow parents to come into the nursery at drop off and collection times they continued to make them wait at the entrance.

Speaking about the medicine cabinet, the inspector said: “Staff were unsure about its purpose. Instructions for medication were unclear, and for one prescribed cream, there were no instructions at all.

The inspector said that while ‘some staff’ showed nurture and

kindness, a requirement from a previous inspection that interactions promoted individual development had not been met.

The report said: "Some staff placed an excessive emphasis on children

sharing, causing confusion and frustration among children who were still developing their understanding of ownership and empathy.

"Some staff used language such as 'kicking off' and 'riled up' when describing

children, indicating the necessity for staff to adopt a more empathetic approach to supporting children's emotional resilience and wellbeing."

It revealed the nursery had attempted to introduce gardening to the children's experience but it said: "potatoes grew in an area inaccessible to children, as staff expressed concerns about potential damage. Lettuce and tomatoes in the dragon room were neglected on a paint drying unit."

And it said while staff believed parents were happy with the arrangements to collect their children at the door, feedback from families revealed a different story.

It said: "Parents expressed a strong desire to enter the playroom, highlighting that feedback at the door was rushed, lacked detail, and raised concerns about confidentiality due to the presence of other parents at the door."

The inspector noted that the nursery had been taken over by a new company last year and was 'in a transitional phase'.

A spokesperson said: "Whilst there were positive things noted by the inspectors sadly, they also identified areas below the standards and practice that we accept in our nurseries. The outcome of the inspection is a hugely disappointing result however following the inspection we have put a Development Plan in place to address the points raised in the report."

Yvonne Smillie, Managing Director for Busy Bees in Scotland said, "A new management team is bringing energy and professionalism to the nursery and parents have already commented on the improvements this has delivered. We are in regular contact with all the parents and are keeping them informed of changes and improvements we are making and I believe this is much appreciated.

"We continue to provide training and upskilling where appropriate for the staff team and their enthusiasm, commitment and growing confidence is making a real difference. This is reflected in their interactions with the children and is positively impacting upon the children's engagement and learning in nursery.

"We now have a much better foundation to ensure that we are moving forward in a positive way and are enormously grateful for the support of parents as we make these changes and we are committed to continuing to work together as partners in their child's learning. I am sure that when the Care Inspectorate return they will find a very different nursery and we look forward to demonstrating our continued commitment and progress."

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter