

# Stramash Outdoor Nursery, Elgin Day Care of Children

Spynie Village Hall  
Spynie  
Elgin  
IV30 8XJ

Telephone: 01631 566080

Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 8 September 2017

**Service provided by:**  
Stramash Social Enterprise

**Service provider number:**  
SP2011011702

**Care service number:**  
CS2014334483

## About the service

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

The service has been registered with the Care Inspectorate since 13 July 2015.

Stramash Outdoor Nursery is a daycare of children service and is registered to provide care to a maximum of 32 children aged two to five years during school term time and to a maximum of 32 children aged from two years to seven years during school holiday time.

The provider is Stramash Social Enterprise.

The service operates from their base at Spynie village hall, car park and field as well as a woodland site a short distance away by mini bus. The village hall and yurt on the woodland site provide warmth and shelter and an indoor space for the children if needed.

The service's aims include:

"To provide a safe and stimulating environment where children can feel happy and safe, encourage the development of the whole child - emotional, social, physical and intellectual, develop confidence and self esteem, encourage children to explore, appreciate and respect their environment".

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 (also known as SHANARRI).

## What people told us

There were 34 children present at the time of inspection. During the inspection we observed and spoke with the children (depending on their age) individually and also as part of a group. We were able to see how much they enjoyed the challenge, excitement and adventure of being outdoors. They were happy, relaxed and having fun learning and discovering about the natural world. Staff were warm, caring and attentive in their approach. Children were confident about approaching staff should they need any help.

The seven parents we spoke with were very happy with the service their child received. They felt involved and well informed and commented very positively about the skill of staff and the opportunities their child was being given to develop, grow and flourish. They had no concerns about the arrangements in place to transport the children safely from the village hall to the site and back.

We also received 14 care standards questionnaires from the 25 questionnaires we distributed before the inspection. 11 parents were very happy and three were happy overall with the quality of care their child received. They all felt the service had involved them and their child in developing the service and asking for their ideas and feedback. Almost all of the written comments from parents/carers about the quality of care and support, the environment and staffing were very positive. An issue was raised about communication when picking up your child, the use of booster seats (for the older children) when travelling on the mini bus and a named person for each child. This was fully discussed with the manager and staff as part of the inspection. We were satisfied

the service had plans in place to further improve communication at changeover times, the manager was clear on the legislation regarding child restraints on mini buses. Three-point seat belts were currently in use for the older children. He explained that work was already underway to enable suitable booster seats to be fitted to their mini buses for all the children. In the interim, the manager agreed parents of the older children would be asked if they wished to supply their own car seat. Staff had key responsibility for specific groups of children known as the acorns, saplings and oaks. This information was displayed on the service's notice board.

Comments we got back included:

"Brilliant service. I'm so happy that my child is outdoors everyday. It's made a very positive impact on his/her behaviour and development"

"My [child] loves Stramash Nursery. The staff are always friendly and helpful. Communication about my child is good and we enjoy participating in the interactive learning diary"

"Stramash is a wonderful nursery and I would not want my child to go anywhere else. He/she absolutely loves it and the staff are very good with him/her. They have fabulous ideas and put a lot of effort into everything they do. Any issues are always resolved quickly and concerns are always taken seriously. I cannot think of a better start for my children than Stramash"

"My child loves Stramash..... it is an amazing opportunity to be given for our children to experience nature and their natural environment safely and with the freedom to explore and develop"

"Stramash provides an excellent opportunity for outdoor learning. My child has freedom to explore and discover on a daily basis, without being confined to a small room/classroom. The staff are always friendly and helpful, they encourage my child, whilst allowing him/her to make his/her own decisions at the same time. I have nothing but praise for Stramash and its staff".

## Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at their own improvement plan and quality assurance paperwork. These demonstrated their priorities for development and how they were monitoring the quality of the provision within the service.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	6 - Excellent
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

## Quality of care and support

### Findings from the inspection

They had achieved a very good standard for this theme.

Staff continued to create an inclusive, nurturing environment where children and their families felt welcome, listened to, valued and respected. Children were confident about expressing their thoughts, views and feelings and making choices and decisions about what they wanted to do and play with throughout the day. Staff were supporting them very well to plan, develop and create their own learning activities, spaces and experiences. Children continued to have very good opportunities to learn, grow, practise and develop new skills. For example, they were able to tell us how to care for, handle and look after the chickens Red, Penny and Marge, collect their eggs, observe if they were healthy and how important it was to wash their hands afterwards. They reflected sensitively how "chicken nugget" had died and how they had marked the event with a ceremony.

Transitions continued to be carefully planned and evaluated with the progress and outcomes for the younger children closely monitored to make sure their experiences were positive and meaningful. Parents we spoke with were very pleased with how well they and their child had been "settled in" to the service and the arrangements in place to support their child's development and learning.

Staff had embedded the GIRFEC national practice model in their work with children and their families. For example, working collaboratively with everyone that may be involved in a child's care and support, gathering and sharing the information they needed to support positive outcomes for children. Staff spoke sensitively and very knowledgeably about children's individual care, learning and development needs. Parents spoke positively about staff's support and understanding of their child's needs.

As planned, they had:

- Further refined their keyworker system to strengthen their links with home and work more collaboratively with parents to support and enrich children's learning.
- Reviewed their protocols for managing children's medication using our guidance: "Management of Medication in Daycare and Childminding Services" to support current good practice.
- Defined children's next steps more clearly to enable them to plan their progression pathways more effectively and secure and sustain their progress over time. For example, focussed observation formed the basis of staff's assessments and evaluations in the interactive learning diaries they shared with parents. Parents spoke positively about this development. We discussed how each child could also create their own floorbook as part of their learning journey and progression pathway with their parents, keeping their own record of how they were leading on their own learning and identifying their next steps.

Staff were confident about their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection and keeping children safe. They knew what to do should they have any child protection concerns and who to pass the information onto. They were refreshing their knowledge and understanding of this area of their work through training, reviews and regular discussion of their practice.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

They had achieved an excellent standard for this theme.

Children were being given inspiring opportunities to grow and develop, be adventurous, build their resilience and be active, independent and innovative in their play and learning. For example, hammocks and tents provided cosy spaces for the children to sleep and rest, tarps erected under the trees created sheltered areas where the children could come together for circle time, enjoy games, stories and their lunch together with friends. We were able to see children having fun swinging on tyres and branches, exploring and learning about foraging for mushrooms, measuring the rainfall and reading the temperature gauge on the weather station. As well as filling up the feeders for the wild birds and the water for the chickens. Staff had also opened snack time up to let children decide for themselves when they should take a break from all their energetic play and have some food, helping them to recognise when they were hungry and needed to eat.

Staff continued to provide a safe, fun, enabling and nurturing environment for children outdoors, giving them the time and space to develop their ideas and use their imagination and ingenuity to create a dynamic environment where they could explore, discover, experiment with and enjoy making their own. We were able to see children safely negotiating their outdoor space, being creative and confidently making choices and decisions about their play and learning from a range of different organic materials, tools, natural and sensory resources, messy and muddy play. For example, climbing and using their wheelbarrows to transport and collect things for the mud kitchen, digging to make soup in a bucket, building their own stage and putting on a rock and roll show together.

As identified from the last inspection, they had:

- Revised in consultation with parents the route for transporting children to the woodland site.
- Clearly documented their staffing levels in all the risk assessments they carried out for trips and outings, specialised activities and transporting children.
- Improved their toilet facilities at the woodland site to further protect children's right to privacy and dignity.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 6 - excellent

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

They had achieved a very good standard for this theme.

Staff were knowledgeable, skilled, dedicated and passionate about their work. They were embedding the key principles of the rights of the child, relationships, responsive care and respect into their practice, as well as linking the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators and the Scottish Government's National Practice Guidance: Building the Ambition to the Curriculum for Excellence framework to enable them to support and achieve positive outcomes for children and their families. Their interaction with children and their families was sensitive, well judged and responsive. They were using schemas (the patterns and different ways children learn) to identify, assess and support children's development and learning.

As recommended from the last inspection, regular staff meetings now enabled everyone to share and reflect on their practice, identify where they could improve, and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of any training they had undertaken. Checking with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) register confirmed procedures were in place to track staff's registration and renewal requirements. Discussion with the manager and staff confirmed their annual appraisals (with six monthly reviews) were also being carried out along with individual supervision sessions. The training plan to support them with their continued professional and personal development included bushcraft, creating a safe, nurturing environment and learning for sustainability.

A safer recruitment audit carried out by us confirmed they were implementing appropriate procedures to recruit new staff safely and fairly. We discussed how they were reviewing and updating their safer recruitment and selection procedures, in line with the recently updated national good practice guidance "Safer Recruitment Through Better Recruitment".

### Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

### Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of management and leadership

### Findings from the inspection

They had made very good progress in relation to this theme.

As required from the last inspection, we were able to see staffing levels and ratios being maintained over the lunchtime period (and throughout the day) to support positive outcomes and ensure children's health, wellbeing and safety was protected. Staff had clear procedures to follow (with cover arrangements in place) should they

be unable to attend work at short notice. Staff holiday cover was now being well managed with full account taken of the manager's time (or those acting in their absence) when setting staffing levels.

The management team were establishing a very good approach to monitoring and evaluation and checking and reviewing how well they were doing. For example, they were incorporating the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators into their procedures along with the guidance document "Building the Ambition" to measure and assess positive outcomes for children and their families. As planned, they were implementing the self evaluation document 'How good is our Early Learning and Childcare' into their processes and procedures as well as regular meetings to enable everyone to plan, assess and carefully monitor and evaluate their work.

They remained committed to making improvements. As well as, reviewing and updating their improvement plan using contributions from children and their families, they had reviewed their vision, values and aims with everyone. Priorities for improvement included critical reflection of practice, children having a stronger relationship with the natural world and connecting learning at home with learning at nursery. We agreed with these areas for improvement.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

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

## Previous requirements

### Requirement 1

The provider must ensure appropriate staff levels and ratios are being maintained at all times, as detailed in Annex A of the National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.

In order to achieve this they must:

- i) Ensure they have robust reporting procedures and contingency arrangements in place for the unplanned absence of staff
- ii) Ensure they make proper provision for the planned absence of staff
- iii) Ensure the manager (or those acting in their absence) is supernumerary when setting staffing levels.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011. SSI 2011/210, Regulation 4(1)(a) Welfare of service user.

Timescale: On receipt of this report.

**This requirement was made on 2 September 2016.**

### Action taken on previous requirement

See comments under the management and leadership theme of 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

The external manager should make sure staff's registration and renewal requirements with the SSSC are being met and their annual appraisals (with six monthly reviews) are being carried out.

NCS Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 12: Confidence in Staff and Standard 14: Well managed service.

**This recommendation was made on 2 September 2016.**

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

See progress under the staffing theme of this report.

### Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

### Enforcement

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



## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
20 Jul 2016	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	3 - Adequate
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate

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