

Stramash Outdoor Nursery Day Care of Children

Hilltops
Ganavan Road
Oban
PA34 5TU

Telephone: 01631 566080

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 13 December 2017

Service provided by:
Stramash Social Enterprise

Service provider number:
SP2011011702

Care service number:
CS2011301594

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

This service was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 14 August 2012.

Stramash Outdoor Nursery is a daycare of children service and is registered to provide care to a maximum of 32 children aged 3 years to pre school during school term time and to a maximum of 32 children aged from 3 years to 7 years during school holiday time.

The provider is Stramash Social Enterprise.

The service operates from a woodland site, on a hillside near Ganavan, close to Oban. The two huts on the woodland site provide warmth and shelter and an indoor space for the children to enjoy different activities.

The service's aims include:

"Facilitate the personal and social development of people so they can reach their full potential in life, create an understanding and appreciation of the outdoors helping nurture stewardship of the environment, all children are enabled to learn through play outside and in nature, children are helped to care and look after other people and our site".

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 23 children present at the time of inspection aged 3-5 years. During the inspection we observed and spoke with the children individually and also as part of a group. They had great fun sharing their views and experiences with us. We were able to see how much they enjoyed playing musical statues and performing in their nativity play with their parents as the audience, the excitement of Santa visiting them with presents and the adventure of being outdoors. Almost all the children were happy and settled. Staff were warm, caring and friendly. Children were confident about approaching staff should they need any help.

The six parents we spoke with were very happy with the service their child received. They felt involved and well informed and commented positively about the skill of staff and the opportunities their child was being given to develop, grow and flourish.

We also received 19 care standards questionnaires from the 40 questionnaires we distributed before the inspection. 18 parents were very happy overall with the quality of care their child received and one was unknown. Almost 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. One parent felt "they could make more use of the local places such as the library and do more outings". An issue was raised about "the management and lack of information [from the board]". This was discussed with the provider as part of the inspection. They were in full agreement that communication with everyone at service level could be better. This was an area they had already identified they needed to strengthen and improve upon.

Comments we got back included:

"My child has progressed well at Stramash. He/she is gaining in confidence and ability. I am very happy with his/her level of care. He/she loves the staff team"

"Very happy overall, any queries or questions asked have been no bother to be thoroughly answered"

"My child has got a lot out of the service. His/her confidence has grown, and he/she has become more independent"

"Staff are an inspiration with their enthusiasm and level of care for my child. Activities are engaging and my child feels involved in nursery life"

"Stramash Oban is fantastic! The staff are brilliant and we could not be happier with the time and experience our child has had attending Stramash"

"Stramash is an amazing nursery that I can't praise enough and I have recommended it to quite a few families".

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	4 - Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

They had achieved a good standard for this theme.

Staff were working hard to create an inclusive, nurturing environment where children and their families felt welcome, listened to, valued and respected. For example, staff valued and had taken account of parents' knowledge and views of their child's development needs, interests and personality when planning their transition arrangements and developing and reviewing each child's personal plan. This was helping children to form positive relationships with trusted adults and feel valued, safe and secure. We were able to see children 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 embedding the GIRFEC national practice model in their work with children and their families. As planned, they were working more collaboratively with parents and providers children had shared placements with, to gather and share the information they needed to support positive outcomes for them and enrich their learning. As a result, parents we spoke with were very happy with the arrangements in place to support their child's development and learning.

Comments we got back from our questionnaires also included:

"The topics covered in the more structured sessions have inspired my [child] and sparked his/her curiosity. One of the many examples I could give was following a science activity about electricity, our [child] borrowed a book from the library so we could find out more about electricity. We have been so pleased with how staff have supported our [child's] development socially, emotionally and educationally"

A personalised learning log framework was being used to track children's progress and celebrate their achievements, with interactive learning diaries being regularly shared with their parents. They had plans to develop floorbooks as a planning and evaluation tool with training arranged for staff. We discussed how children could also create their own floorbooks as part of their learning journey, keeping their own record of how they were planning and identifying next steps in their learning. The management team spoke positively about this development and how it could further support children with leading on their own learning and sharing their fun and progress with their families.

As identified in their improvement plan, they were moving to a more meaningful, relevant and focussed system of observations. This was to better reflect children's development and learning and further support their planning, with next steps focussing on more appropriate areas to support and extend children's learning, and help secure and sustain their progress over time. We agreed with this area for improvement. We also discussed the implementation of short term support plans, as well as long term strategies, to help children for example, with settling in.

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. The manager confirmed they would continue to refresh their knowledge and understanding of this area of their work through training, reviews and regular discussion of their practice. They were also clear about the procedures to follow should a child's absence be unplanned. We discussed their use of a laminated sheet for the daily register. The provider confirmed hard copies would be kept to ensure the register was up to date and accurate at all times.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

There continued to be a strong focus on providing a dynamic, fun, stimulating and enabling environment outside with open ended materials, resources and loose parts play, to promote children's independence and help build their resilience. Staff knew the importance of giving children the time and space to develop their ideas, flourish and be creative. As a result, we were able to see children having fun expressing themselves and using their imagination, ingenuity and natural curiosity to explore, discover and experiment with a range of different materials, tools, natural and sensory resources. For example, making ice cakes with foraged items and water in their mud kitchen, working out different ways to use tyres, tubes and pipes to transport cars and devising their own obstacle course using rope walks, swings, tunnels and logs. This was helping them to learn about measuring, the properties of water, persevere with tasks, practise their fine and large motor skills, as well as develop their physical agility and balance.

Since the last inspection, the two yurts had been replaced with two new huts. An additional toilet tent had also been erected to ensure children had ready access to toilet facilities when they needed it. Staff were in the process of trialling a selection of different types of mats to make sitting on the hut floors more comfortable. The most suitable mats would then be purchased in the new year for children to use regularly. They also had plans to improve their office facilities and internet access on the site. We discussed and the provider agreed the new huts presented a great opportunity for them to create more nurturing and cosy spaces for children to relax, read stories and rest comfortably.

On the day we inspected, due to the very cold weather they had not experienced before, the water for washing children's hands had ice in it and the path to the toilets had frozen over causing children to slip. The provider confirmed making provision for warm water to be available on site could be remedied immediately. Their risk assessments for cold weather would be updated as a matter of priority to include appropriate measures when temperatures dropped too low. Clear guidance would also be made available to staff in relation to children wearing hats, gloves and warm clothing in colder weather.

Staff knew the importance of managing risk positively to promote children's independence and empower them to make safe decisions, develop their knowledge and self-awareness, as well as provide opportunities for them to contribute more of their ideas and experiences to their learning. As a result, they had plans to implement the balanced approach of a risk benefit model (with a clear policy framework in place for making judgements) to further support children's learning, promote their independence and build their resilience, self confidence and enjoyment of risky play.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

They had made good progress in relation to this theme.

As recommended from the last inspection, individual supervision sessions were now in place for staff, along with annual appraisals (with six monthly reviews), to support their development and learning and ensure they meet their Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registration requirements. Regular staff meetings were enabling 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.

Since the last inspection, four new members of staff had been recruited and were registered (or had applications pending) with the SSSC. The new staff team were dedicated and committed to further developing their knowledge, leadership skills and practice to build capacity within the team and support and achieve positive outcomes for children and their families. They were taking responsibility for their own continued professional development and had undertaken training in language and music, whittling wood, sand, mud and clay, attachment matters and reading matters. We discussed and the management team agreed an audit should now be carried out of staff's skills and experience linked to the early years framework, with a training plan devised to support them with their continued professional and personal development, as well as the service's wider planning goals.

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".

Due to the large site and the deployment of staff on the day we visited, we observed in some instances, it was difficult for staff to monitor all the children and be responsive to their individual needs. For example, when children who were less confident about expressing their thoughts, views and feelings were in need of more nurturing care and support. The provider was in full agreement, when allocating and deploying staff fuller account needed to be taken of their setting and the differing needs of the children using the service.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

They had made 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 to support positive outcomes for children and their families. There was now a clear management structure in place to strengthen the lines of communication, responsibility and accountability within the service and the organisation. 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 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. We discussed how the new Health and Social Care Standards My support, my life could also be incorporated into their quality assessment framework.

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 observations and 360 degree appraisals for all staff, further development of children's interactive learning diaries and links with home and the monitoring of new literacy trackers to capture children's learning. We agreed with these areas for improvement.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - 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 clear and effective lines of communication, responsibility and accountability are established between the external manager, line manager and service manager
- 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

Please 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 annual appraisals (with six monthly reviews) are carried out. Individual support and supervision sessions should be introduced for staff to further develop and support their practice and ensure they meet their SSSC registration and renewal requirements.

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

Please 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.

Enforcement

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

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings								
16 Jun 2016	Unannounced	<table> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>4 - Good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staffing</td> <td>3 - Adequate</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management and leadership</td> <td>3 - Adequate</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	4 - Good	Environment	5 - Very good	Staffing	3 - Adequate	Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
Care and support	4 - Good									
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Staffing	3 - Adequate									
Management and leadership	3 - Adequate									
26 Jun 2013	Unannounced	<table> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staffing</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management and leadership</td> <td>5 - Very good</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	5 - Very good	Environment	5 - Very good	Staffing	5 - Very good	Management and leadership	5 - Very good
Care and support	5 - Very good									
Environment	5 - Very good									
Staffing	5 - Very good									
Management and leadership	5 - Very good									

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