

Evergreen Outdoor Nursery Day Care of Children

35 Avenuepark Street
Maryhill
Glasgow
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 April 2024

Service provided by:
Maryhill Mobile Children's Services

Service provider number:
SP2003001275

Service no:
CS2015337343

About the service

Evergreen Outdoor Nursery provides a care service to a maximum of 26 children aged from two years and six months to those not yet attending primary school. The care service is provided by Maryhill Mobile Children's Services in the Maryhill area of Glasgow. The outdoor nursery operates mainly from woodland areas within Dawsholm Park and Botanic Gardens as well as base premises at 35 Avenuepark Street, Maryhill. The base premises are used as a drop off and pick up point for children and parents and in adverse weather conditions. A minibus takes children from the base to the woodland environment a short distance away. The base premises are close to shops, schools, transport routes and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 8 April 2024 between 08:15 and 16:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with 12 children using the service and reviewed survey responses from 13 parents whose children attend the service
- spoke with the senior management team and three staff
- observed practice and staff interactions with children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children benefited from a skilled staff team who worked very well together and had created a welcoming, inclusive environment.
- Positive working relationships between the management team and staff promoted a collegiate approach to providing high quality play experiences for children.
- Children experienced interesting and motivating play and learning opportunities within creative outdoor spaces.
- Children were spoken and listened to in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included.
- The manager's leadership approach had helped build, maintain and strengthen the capacity of the team to deliver continuity in children's care.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes enabled the service to deliver high quality care and support tailored towards children's and families' particular needs and choices.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as very good as we found performance demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require any significant adjustment.

We looked at how the service's planning approaches for children's care, learning and development ensured they experienced positive outcomes. Children benefited from a skilled staff team who worked very well together and had created a welcoming, inclusive environment. Their sound knowledge of child development, GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child) and the well-being indicators resulted in children's individual needs being met. We observed staff being responsive to children's changeable interests and demands. Children were spoken and listened to in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included.

Staff worked closely with families, involving them in decisions about their child's care and development. This enabled the relevant staff to respond quickly, sensitively and compassionately to changes in a child's life. Staff were skilled in using the information in children's personal plans to meet their needs. Personal plans and online learning story journals using the SHANARRI (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included) wellbeing indicators and the Early Level of Curriculum for Excellence were regularly reviewed and included targets for achievement and next steps. Staff told us how they worked with parents to ensure personal plans included the key information needed to provide appropriate care, meet any medical needs and take forward children's learning and play interests. Plans and records for children with identified additional support needs took account of multidisciplinary assessments and inputs. These supported a personal planning approach which was solution focused and identified children's strengths, personal challenges and development outcomes. One parent commented: "The staff take the time to get to know each child's personality and needs and you can see how passionate they are about supporting each child through every stage of their development." A second parent told us: "My daughter has additional needs that can change very quickly. The staff and myself work closely to make sure all her needs are met and her care plan is up to date." A third parent stated: "No matter the time of day any staff member will take the time to listen and discuss any aspects for my child care."

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator as we found performance where identified strengths had a significant positive impact on children's experiences and outcomes.

We found that staff promoted a culture within the service that focussed on promoting the children's right to play, have fun and experience challenge. Staff worked hard to provide high quality learning experiences by continuously promoting choice, children's interests, as well as tracking and reflecting on individual achievements. One parent commented: "My child has been involved in forest school, mud painting, wildlife walks, day trips, crafts, technology, number games, etc. Play is very varied and imaginative. I don't ever worry about my child being under stimulated as she gets a wide range of experiences." Another parent told us: "Recently the kids have enjoyed the outdoor learning activities they have done, building fires, learning how to light the fire, make hot chocolate and use outdoor materials to learn about their environment and science. For example, they made a volcano experiment at the forest." Through discussion, it was evident that staff had a shared understanding of child development and early years pedagogy and used this to scaffold and shape the breadth and depth of children's learning.

We found that children's voice was highly valued. Staff took time to extend conversations with children about their play and used well-timed open ended questioning to further extend and challenge thinking and learning. We found that staff used observations of children's significant play interests to adapt their support for and resourcing of play experiences. We highlighted to staff the value of ensuring written comments on potential lines of development for children's play and related future play challenges are set out clearly as part of each learning journal observation.

Staff had high aspirations to enable children to be successful. As a result, children were confident, happy and motivated to learn. We discussed with staff strategies and observation approaches for developing children's sense of ownership of leading change related to their self chosen collaborative play projects. Staff agreed that more flexible use of planning tools based on observations of children's most engaging and involving play experiences could strengthen existing opportunities for children to shape their play environments. This can extend opportunities for staff to reflect on when children display deep level engagement in their play and support them to provide greater autonomy and choice as to how this will be taken forward.

We highlighted and discussed with staff schema based observation and planning strategies that had the potential to support the transition experiences of the youngest children during their settling into the nursery. This approach can help staff to identify what will hold individual children's interest as well as help them with the stage of development that they are currently working through. It can consolidate existing approaches to settling in and promoting a sense of security in new children by recognising their achievements at home. Staff agreed that this will further demonstrate how the nursery's approach to supporting children's play is personalised.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require significant adjustment.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The service made very good use of available resources to create a motivating environment for children to play together. Play spaces included a range of open-ended and natural resources to stimulate children's creativity and problem solving. Staff ensured spaces were set up in ways that were adaptable and had potential to encourage children's sustained shared thinking. One parent commented: "The nursery has designated outdoor areas in a park which is in a safe environment to allow the children to play, there is suits provided and they make sure they are not exposed to the elements and also provide a range of outdoor play and learning."

We found that children's ideas and reflections on their play spaces were used to support children's play plans within the outdoor play environment. We found that staff routinely shared their reflections on how setting up and monitoring of each base camp area led to challenging and engaging play opportunities for children. This helped to ensure that the outdoor play experiences offered excitement, engaged children's interests and appeared challenging to children. A parent told us: "Most of the day is spent outdoors. I like that the children are trusted to saw wood, climb, etc and the staff let them get messy and muddy. I feel this gives children confidence and encourages creativity." Another parent commented: "My child has been involved in a lot of outdoor experiences from mud slides to rope slacks and using a kelly kettle."

Children's safety was promoted through detailed risk assessments for all environments and activities accessed by them.

Staff held "risky business" discussions with all children. These supported meaningful discussions about safety outdoors and children's ability to assess and manage their own risks during woodland play. All risk assessments were regularly reviewed and staff were aware of their responsibility to identify and remove any new hazards in the way of children's safety and wellbeing. Children were also kept safe and healthy because of the robust infection control practices that were in place within the setting.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require significant adjustment.

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The senior management team promoted a shared vision for the setting that reflected the aspirations of children, families, partners and the wider community. Positive working relationships between the senior management team and staff promoted a collegiate approach to providing high quality play experiences for children.

Staff told us how the manager provided a clear focus for their shared team work through team meetings including setting out clear responsibilities and expectations. We found that the leadership approach followed had helped build, maintain and strengthen the capacity of the team to deliver continuity in children's care. It had contributed to children's emotional health and wellbeing being a major focus on transitions into the setting. This ensured the care children experienced was delivered by familiar key adults who were perceived as consistent, reliable, trustworthy, and responsive to their needs.

The staff team worked together very effectively to evaluate and reflect on their practice. The management team told us how they dedicated time to analysing children's, staff and parents' contributions to any consultations and extracting the key messages or themes. A parent commented: "We are invited to give feedback and asked for ideas and things we can contribute as a family. We are also invited to the AGM and are included in how the overall service is run. Staff are always involving the children and parents in all aspects of the nursery." Staff highlighted how parental involvement had been increasing through the reintroduction of Stay and Play sessions. One member of staff commented: "These provide a great chance for families to get to know staff and other families well. This has led to families meeting up outside the nursery with their children, a great little community is building up." We found that staff team's family engagement work and self-evaluation processes enabled the service to deliver high quality care and support tailored towards children's and families particular needs and choices. We highlighted additional practical consultation strategies for widening family engagement in the improvement planning process. The staff agreed these had the potential to further strengthen parent and carer engagement in their shared improvement discussions.

The manager told us how supervision and support meetings with staff regularly led to agreement on specific improvement or development goals that meet the professional development need of individual staff as well as the improvement priorities of the service as a whole. Staff were keen to use professional learning opportunities to help them take forward current ideas, develop and implement best practice guidance. We found that staff were highly motivated, well led and passionate about improving outcomes for all children.

This resulted in children experiencing high quality interactions and a broad range of stimulating play experiences centred around their emerging interests.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require significant adjustment.

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Effective staff deployment across the service meant that children's individual needs were being met by the right number of staff throughout almost all elements of the day. The staff to child ratio allowed staff to be responsive to individual needs which enhanced children's experiences and ensured children had the right support at the right time. Children who required additional support were well supported by staff to feel respected and included in daily experiences. This was enhanced through effective working relationships with families. The staff had created a very inclusive and supportive ethos, built upon mutual respect and trust. The team had a good understanding and knowledge of the needs of children and families within the context of the local community.

A robust induction process supported newly appointed staff to meet children's needs. The induction programme helped new staff to settle into their role and become part of the staff team. As a result, they were clear about their roles and responsibilities which supported children's experiences.

The staff routinely engaged in a range of professional learning activities that built on and sustained their practice. This included: advanced autism awareness, early years literacy strategies, early numeracy, block play, realising a rights based approach, sustainable practice in the outdoors, Out To Play - Eco Drama, Gender Friendly Training. We found staff were confident in discussing how they had improved their practice as a result of their own professional learning activities. We found that staff development opportunities had a positive impact on the quality of experiences for children, their progress and wider improvements in the setting.

We found that the senior management team continually sought to build the leadership capacity within the team by ensuring staff took forward new initiatives that supported children to consistently have experiences and outcomes which are as positive as possible.

Complaints

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

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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