

Amber Kindergarten Day Care of Children

Camphill Schools
Murtle House
Aberdeen
AB15 9EP

Telephone: 01224 865893

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 3 March 2017

Service provided by:
Camphill Rudolf Steiner Schools Limited

Service provider number:
SP2003000021

Care service number:
CS2003016365

About the service

Amber Kindergarten registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 31 children aged 12 months to seven years at any one time, of whom no more than eight may be under three years of age. In Amber a maximum of 19 children and in Mica a maximum of 12 children at any one time.

Amber Kindergarten is in the Camphill Early Childhood Centre located on the Camphill Rudolf Steiner School's Murtle Campus. The school is in a semi-rural area to the west of Aberdeen. The early years programme is based on the Waldorf Curriculum. It is also informed by the later research of Karl Konig, other contemporary educationalists and researchers of child development, and by the Curriculum for Excellence.

The aims of the service include to provide a warm, safe, nurturing environment for your children, integrating care and education in a holistic way to support their healthy development and sense of wellbeing.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it right for every child (also known as GIRFEC). This is 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 GIRFEC. They are: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

What people told us

During the inspection we found children were happy, independent and confident. They had clearly formed extremely good relationships with the staff and their peers. They were engaged and motivated in their play and clearly thoroughly enjoyed their time at nursery. Children readily approached staff who responded in a sensitive, nurturing and caring manner.

We sent out 15 Care Standards Questionnaires and 13 parents completed and returned the questionnaires to us. When asked about the overall quality of care their child received at the service:

- 12 parents/carers indicated they were very satisfied
- one parent/carer indicated they were satisfied.

Overall the parent questionnaires and discussions with parents indicated parents were extremely pleased with the service provided. Parents spoken with particularly liked the amount of time children spent outdoors. Some parents gave examples of how staff had gone out their way to provide extra support for their child. Parents found the staff very approachable and would feel confident to raise any concerns.

Comments from parents included:

"Very friendly staff, great environment, lot of outdoor play."

"I can highly recommend Amber Kindergarten. The teachers and all staff are highly engaged with the children. Our son has always been so well cared for - always sensitively and appropriately. He has made wonderful friendships with the children at the school and they are always highly engaged with the activities that have been offered. It is a wonderful school where the children can enjoy being children."

"I am delighted about the service my child is warmly welcome, respected and appreciated. I feel he is free to play and develop at his own pace. At the same time the resources and program are of superb quality. Staff are skilled, warm and creative. I am very happy!"

"My child is thriving at Amber, she comes home full of joy! I could not be happier with the service."

"The wide range of outdoor play activities/learning/nature exploration is very important to me as a parent and hugely enjoyed by our child. He's in the best of hands and I can't recommend this service highly enough."

"We are very happy with the service provided at Amber Kindergarten."

"I wish all nurseries could offer what Amber can offer. Amber is an example to follow. In particular the outdoor aspect every day. My children have both loved Amber and the people working there."

"I very much appreciate the 'family feel' to this kindergarten and would like to thank everyone for their daily attention to detail."

Self assessment

The Care Inspectorate received a fully completed self-assessment from the provider. The provider identified what it thought the service did well and areas they were planning on developing. The self-assessment could be developed further to focus more on how the service is providing good quality outcomes for children and to reflect more on the areas for improvement the service has identified.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	6 - Excellent
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Staff were nurturing, caring and responsive in their interactions with children. Children appeared to have formed strong attachments with staff, this supported them to feel secure. Children were offered appropriate comfort when they were upset or unsettled. As a result children appeared happy and confident in the service and readily approached the manager and staff.

Children's health and care needs were well supported. Information was gathered from parents to support staff to meet children's health and care needs. Where appropriate detailed personal plans were put in place. These provided clear guidance for staff on how to meet each child's needs and ensured staff worked consistently. The plans did not record they had been developed in consultation with parents. We suggested the service record this

information.

Appropriate procedures were in place to safeguard children. A child protection policy was in place and this provided guidance in the event of any concerns. Staff attended child protection training annually. As a result staff spoken with had a good understanding of child protection issues and were confident with the procedure to follow in the event of any concerns.

Children were supported to be healthy and active. There were opportunities for children to spend a good amount of time outdoors each day. Snacks were healthy and reflected best practice guidance. Snack time had a homely feel and was a sociable experience. All the children worked together cooperatively to set the table. Staff and children sat and ate together. Staff interacted very well with the children, they supported discussions and took time to listen to children and valued what they had to say.

Children were supported to achieve their potential. Both children and parents contributed to children's learning records. Clear records were kept that enabled staff to track children's progress. Appropriate observations captured children's level of development. Staff demonstrated a very good understanding of the next steps they were working on to support individual children to progress. The next steps recorded were not all up to date. We suggested the service look at reducing the amount of tracking paperwork they undertook to allow them to focus on recording next steps more promptly.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The nursery was clean, well maintained and safe. The playrooms were thoughtfully presented with consideration given to the quality of the resources and the impact on the senses. The rooms were homely with soft tones and no hard corners which created a gentle and secure atmosphere. This contributed to children being cared for in a pleasant, nurturing and safe environment.

The playrooms had a rich range of natural, open-ended and real life resources. We found children played very creatively with these for extended periods of time. Staff were highly skilled at supporting children in their play; they knew when to support children to extend their play and when to step back and not interrupt their play. As a result children were engrossed and motivated in their play. They were developing skills in cooperation and communications.

There were excellent opportunities for children to learn through creativity. Children had accessed an extensive range of different opportunities. We saw children exploring paint in pairs, this supported children to work

together. We found children concentrated for an extended period of time as they explored the textures and colours and negotiated with each other. Interesting resources were provided, including shaving brushes, straws and pipettes that enabled children to experiment. The activity fostered children's creativity, supported children to express feelings and developed their communication and motor skills.

There were opportunities for children to read books and have stories throughout the session that supported children's literacy skills. The session concluded with story time, in a peaceful, thoughtfully set up area. Staff told the story from memory, acting it out with wooden small world characters. The story was told dramatically, capturing children's imagination. All the children listened intently and were completely engaged. The activity provided excellent opportunities for children to develop their imagination, language and concentration skills.

The outdoor play experiences provided a rich range of opportunities for children. Children spent a good amount of time outdoors each day and had one session each week in the woods. Staff supported children to learn how to keep themselves safe and manage risk. We found children were highly engaged and motivated in their outdoor play. They used their imagination and experimented. Staff created opportunities for children to mark make using charcoal from a previous fire, we saw staff supporting children with their numeracy and social skills.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 6 – excellent

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Staff were qualified or working towards a suitable qualification for their role. Those that required to be, were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The SSSC is responsible for registering people who work in social services and regulating their education and training. Staff have six months from starting in post to obtaining their registration. One member of staff had been in post for almost six months but had only very recently applied for registration. An appropriate plan was in place to ensure she did not work with children once she had been employed for six months until her registration was received. **See recommendation 1.**

The service had undertaken Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks for staff before they started in employment. However, for some staff references, had not been obtained before they started in employment. These staff had not been left on their own with children and had not seen to the personal care needs of children. References are an important part of the recruitment process to ascertain if staff have the knowledge, skills and experience necessary for their role. **See recommendation 2.**

Staff had attended a wide range of training to support them in maintaining and developing their skills and knowledge. This included core training such as first aid and child protection and additional training to support staff to develop their skills. Specific training was provided to meet the needs of the service. For example, some staff had attended training of forest schools and outdoor first aid. Staff talked enthusiastically about how they

had implemented their learning from training into the nursery. For example, staff had attended training on children's emotions. We found staff were highly tuned in to children's emotions and effectively supported children.

Staff used skilful questioning to further extend children's learning. Staff were aware of the need to allow children time to take on board information and process it before expecting children to respond. The ethos of respect was evident in the nursery. Staff interacted respectfully with each other and the children. They took time to ensure all children were included in activities. We found staff were skilful at supporting children to resolve conflict, develop empathy and be responsible.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. The provider should ensure applications are made to professional bodies timeously to ensure new staff are registered within six months of starting in employment.

Reference: National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 12:
Confidence in Staff

2. The provider should ensure two satisfactory references are obtained prior to staff starting in employment.

Reference: National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 12:
Confidence in Staff

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The manager and staff had a positive view to parental involvement. There was a wide range of ways for parents to become involved in the nursery. Parents' views were actively sought and used to influence the development of the nursery.

Effective systems were in place to identify and support improvements in the nursery. The manager and staff were involved in auditing the level the service was performing at and identifying areas for improvement. They did this using the best practice document 'Building the Ambition'. This supported staff to reflect on the quality of children's experiences and their own practice. Following the audit improvements plans had been put in place to support staff to develop the service further. We found the service was working towards the areas identified on the improvement plans.

Following the last inspection a detailed action plan had been implemented to support the service to make the identified improvements. This had been effective as the requirement and recommendations had been addressed.

Regular monitoring was undertaken in the nursery. Monitoring had identified areas for improvement and appropriate action had been taken to address these areas. This included general improvements in the nursery, for example further developing the garden area, and areas focussed on improving outcomes for specific children.

The management team observed staff practice and provided support through regular support and supervision meetings. The support provided varied, depending on individual staff needs. Regular team meetings were held to support staff to focus on practice issues and meeting the needs of individual children.

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 review all personal plan information at least once every six months or sooner if there is any change to a child's care, health or welfare needs. This includes review of medication care plans.

This is in order to comply with: The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Service) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210), regulation 5 (1) & (2) (b) (i) (ii) (iii). Personal plans.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing

Timescale for meeting this requirement: four weeks from receipt of this report.

This requirement was made on 3 December 2015.

Action taken on previous requirement

Systems were in place to ensure personal plans were reviewed at least every six months.

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 provider should now develop a robust quality assurance system and make use of the range of key documents to support monitoring of all aspects of provision, along with a quality assurance calendar. This would help identify areas for improvement and drive forward continuous improvement.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to age 16 – Standard 14: A Well-managed Service and Standard 13: Improving the Service

This recommendation was made on 3 December 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This recommendation is met. An effective quality assurance system was in place which had led to improvements in the nursery.

Recommendation 2

The provider should further develop children's personal learning plans to clearly identify the learning, show progression and identify clear next steps. This should then be used to help identify and implement further challenge for children.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to age 16 – Standard 4: Engaging with Children and Standard 5: Quality of Experience

This recommendation was made on 3 December 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This recommendation had been met. Children's personal learning plans had been developed and showed children's learning and progression.

Recommendation 3

The provider should ensure that a system for transition to primary school is developed to ensure strong links. This would continue to support children's emotional resilience through periods of change.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to age 16 – Standard 9: Involving the Community and Standard 5: Quality of Experience

This recommendation was made on 3 December 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This recommendation had been met. For children progressing on to different primary schools a detailed passport was completed with very detailed information on children's progression and next steps with an evaluation of their year. Teachers from the schools were invited to attend the nursery.

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	
3 Dec 2015	Announced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
10 Dec 2013	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
23 Nov 2010	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
24 Feb 2010	Announced (short notice)	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	Not assessed

Date	Type	Gradings	
26 Mar 2009	Unannounced	Care and support	6 - Excellent
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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