

Wee Acorns Day Care of Children

Perth Road
Dunblane
FK15 0BU

Telephone: 01786 826982

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 3 January 2018

Service provided by:
Susan Deeming trading as Wee Acorns

Service provider number:
SP2006008774

Care service number:
CS2006141112

About the service

Wee Acorns registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 24 children from birth to five years of whom no more than nine children may be under two years of age.

The service is located on a main road with easy access to public transport. Children have access to a large playroom with a small kitchen area located to the side of the room. A large garden area is accessed through rear of the playroom. Toilets and a cloakroom area are located outwith the playroom.

The aims and objectives of the nursery included: 'Create an atmosphere which is welcoming, understanding, and informal, where people are treated with respect and where diversity is celebrated'.

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

Throughout the inspection most children remained happy and relaxed in the nursery. Children were enjoying playing with the activities and toys available. During the inspection some children approached us with ease to chat and show us what they were playing with. This demonstrated their confidence and feeling of security in the nursery environment.

We sent 10 Care Standards Questionnaires (CSQs) to parents of children who attended the service. Two were completed and returned to us before the inspection visit. Both parents strongly agreed that overall they were happy with the quality of care their child received in the service. The parents written comments included:

'Wee Acorns is like extended family. My daughter loves going and the staff are so caring. I love the fact it is mixed age groups together, which gives a real family feel. It also allows children to develop an understanding and friendships with all ages and to learn together'.

'I am very pleased with the care that my children receive at Wee Acorns. My older child also was under their care and loved the experience. The staff are friendly, approachable, knowledgeable, and caring. They treat children as individuals and really take the time to get to know their personalities and interests to cater the care to their needs. My children are always happy and stimulated when at Wee Acorns and I feel happy that they are safe and very well looked after by every member of staff'.

One parent spoken to made positive comments about the settling in process her child was experiencing.

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 which 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	3 - Adequate
Quality of environment	2 - Weak
Quality of staffing	3 - Adequate
Quality of management and leadership	2 - Weak

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Children experienced a relaxed and positive settling in process. The informal approach taken encouraged families to work with staff to support this phase and ensure a smooth transition into the new care environment. The settling in stage was used well to identify children's preference of staff. This led to a natural selection of keyworker for the child, meaning formed attachments could be better used by staff to support children's progression and emotional needs.

Throughout the inspection the older children happily played together, confidently chatting and engaging with staff. This demonstrated their feeling of safety and security in the nursery. The older children experienced some nice interactions with staff listening to them and responding to their requests. This supported their emotional wellbeing and contributed to them feeling valued.

Friendships were developing as children were encouraged to understand the needs and feelings of others. Supporting children to positively deal with disputes promoted responsibility, listening skills and caring attitudes.

The experiences of younger children needs improved. These children would benefit from staff engaging more actively with them as individuals, promoting their learning through high quality interactions and discussions. Activities and resources should be better planned to provide more appropriate and varied play experiences which are supportive of the abilities, needs, development progress and interests of all children within the nursery. See recommendation 1.

Children's learning journals supported achievements as staff reviewed their successes and identified leaning needs. The level of information detailed within the journals could be enhanced, for example identified next steps should be consistently meaningful and contribute to individual planning and the provision of resources and daily experiences. Overall, general planning contributed to some positive outcomes and this could now be taken further to support the development and interests of all children.

Care and support plans were not consistent. Lack of relevant information and effective monitoring meant a delay in action being taken which could have enhanced children's experiences and further promoted their individual development. Some children with identified support needs did not have a care plan. This meant missed opportunities to promote children's wellbeing and continued achievement. See requirement 1.

Children could be better supported to develop independence and learning of simple life skills. For example the snack routine could be enhanced by further involving the children and promoting a child led experience. This could be easily achieved by encouraging children to make choices, self-serve and including them in the preparation of foods. Children's play was interrupted as they were all called to come to the snack table at the same time, this could negatively impact on children's enjoyment and learning as their deep engagement in activities is abruptly stopped without choice. The snack routine should be more flexible and supportive of children's wants and needs.

To further promote children's physical health and emotional wellbeing they could be given more opportunities to experience outside play. The garden was a key strength within the service however this area was not well utilised. Time in the garden was limited with some children missing out. See recommendation 2.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 1

1. The provider must ensure that personal care plans are developed and implemented for all children who require additional support or have specific medical and health needs. These plans must be specific and include:

- Identified needs.
- Records of consultations with parents, children and other professionals.
- Next steps and agreed support strategies.
- Realistic timescales.

These plans must be carefully monitored and regularly reviewed in consultation with parents, children and other relevant professionals. Reviews must ensure information remains current and reflective of children's immediate and changing needs.

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)(a),(b),(c),(d) Fitness of Premises.

Timescale: Within two weeks of receipt of this report.

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. The provider and manager should ensure all staff understands the importance of high quality interactions and actively engages with children in a way which supports individual development, respect, confidence and inclusion in the nursery. The provider and manager should also ensure daily activities are planned taking into account the needs and interests of all the children attending. Activities should offer breadth and challenge, encouraging curiosity and thinking to promote learning and continued enjoyment.

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

2. The provider should ensure all children experience regular opportunities to enjoy fresh air, physical exercise and outside play. The planning of daily activities and experiences should include the garden area and where appropriate trips within the local community.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 3.5, Health and Wellbeing.

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The playroom was warm, bright, and spacious with varied areas for children to explore and play in. The attractive display of children's art work promoted their confidence and feeling of being valued as they could proudly see their work and show their friends and parents.

Natural resources promoted a calm environment as children enjoyed different textures and sensory play. Quiet areas supported children's emotional needs as they could rest, relax and be on their own or enjoy time with their friends.

Consideration should be given to the layout of specific activities, for example as the younger children are learning to crawl and walk staff should ensure areas and furniture support this aspect of their development. Also to promote individual choice and inclusion, activities should be easily accessible for all children.

Cleanliness and hygiene within the nursery was weak and did not promote a stimulating environment or ensure a good level of infection control. On arrival we found the kitchen, appliances, nappy changing area and toilets to be dirty and not to a satisfactory level. The kitchen was cluttered and not in a state of good repair. A requirement was made. In between our two visits to the service a deep clean had taken place. Although this had made a significant improvement we found effective cleaning regimes were still not being followed. See requirement 1.

General untidiness throughout the nursery did not support the younger children as they crawled around the nursery unable to avoid toys on the floor. To promote care and pride of the nursery environment, staff should adopt an ethos of respect and lead by example. Staff should routinely keep the environment tidy and encourage children to help. This will support the children to take responsibility and value the play environment. To further promote children's understanding and pride of a safe and pleasant environment staff should involve the older children in the daily assessments made.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 1

1. The provider must ensure all areas within the nursery remain clean and fit for purpose. An effective programme should be developed to ensure appropriate cleaning and maintenance within the nursery. A monitoring system should be devised and implemented to ensure the upkeep of cleanliness and continuous infection control.

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 10(1)(2)(a),(b),(d) Fitness of Premises.

Timescale: With immediate effect.

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 2 - weak

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Staff told us they found their induction was well structured and prepared them for their role in the nursery. Regular support meetings and an identified mentor ensured new staff understood the aims of the nursery and encouraged consistency in their work.

Regular team meetings and supervision sessions contributed to better outcomes for children through establishing clear practice and roles and responsibilities. These meetings and supervision sessions could be enhanced by encouraging staff to reflect on their practice, identifying how they support children and what they could do better to ensure good experiences and continuous positive outcomes.

Staff had developed positive relationships with children, they spoke fondly of individuals supporting them to feel comfortable and welcome.

To promote improvement and a child led service, further training and development opportunities for staff should be provided. This should include having reference to a professional reading library. A targeted training plan should be put in place which ensures training is linked to the needs of staff, service and individual children. This would improve outcomes for children through staff's increased knowledge of early learning and childcare. See recommendation 1.

Staff should be supported in re-visiting their understanding of child development. This should include raising awareness and use of professional guidance documents such as Building the Ambition and Pre-birth to Three. This would further support them in providing meaningful learning experiences and responding to and extending individual learning and development. The above guidance documents can be found on the HUB section of our website. www.hub.careinspectorate.com.

Staff should be supported to access available network meetings and focused visits to other centres to explore and discuss best practice. These should include a range of aspects including provision for the under three's. This would support staff to evaluate their practice and improve experiences and outcomes for children.

Opportunities for distributed leadership for all staff should be progressed and formalised in line with the services own improvement plan. This would support improved provision and empower staff.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The provider and manager should develop an effective training plan which is linked to the specific needs of the children, staff and the service. Training should remain current and support specific areas highlighted in improvement plans. Training should be evaluated and where relevant disseminated to all staff.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 12.2, Confidence in Staff.

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

Parents knew who was accountable and overseeing the service as the manager was present throughout each day and the provider of the nursery regularly worked with the children. This allowed parents opportunity to discuss any concerns and give their views.

Parents had some opportunity to influence provision. This included using 'voting pebbles' for a question of the month and social media consultations. Parents were able to see the impact of their feedback through an informative 'you said, we did' board. This demonstrated parents evaluations were valued and used to develop the service further.

Staff welcomed ongoing support from the local authority to improve the service and promote children's achievement. Relevant short-term action plans were in place supporting continuous improvement.

The manager demonstrated knowledge of the areas for improvement highlighted during this inspection. Some systems were in place to support continuous improvement, including a quality assurance calendar, self-evaluation folder and an improvement plan with identified actions to be taken. These systems were not yet robust or effectively implemented. This had contributed to the issues identified throughout the body of this report, impacting on children's outcomes. See recommendation 1.

We could not confirm safe recruitment. Two staff files were missing relevant references. Also, the manager and a staff member had recently allowed their registration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to lapse. Although this was quickly addressed, we found another staff member was unknowingly on the wrong part of the register. This did not ensure suitability of staff or the safety and protection of children. See requirement 1.

The manager should now familiarise herself with a range of best practice documents and guidance. This should include Step into Leadership, Space to Grow, Our Creative Journey and the new Health and Social Care Standards available on the HUB section of our website. This would support management in developing staff practice and contribute to improvement in children's experiences and learning.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 1

1. The provider must ensure safe recruitment procedures are followed for the employment of all future staff and relevant checks are made before they begin work in the care service. The provider must keep a record of the checks which have been carried out in the relevant staff member's files and this must be available for inspection as required.

In addition the provider must ensure they follow current guidance and legislation relating to staffs registration with the relevant professional body.

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 9(1) Fitness of Employees.

Timescale: With immediate effect.

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. We recommend that provider and manager review and update self-evaluation methods, monitoring systems and on going improvement plans. This is to include:

- Effective monitoring of staff practice and interactions. These should be recorded, used to identify action and communicated to all staff. (This would ensure continuity in practices and improved provision).
- The quality assurance calendar. This should focus on a specific range of aspects including staff performance, hygiene and children's progress.
- Staff involvement in self-evaluation should be progressed.

- More effective use of professional tools to benchmark performance and ensure improvement, (such as National Care Standards and How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare). These documents are available on the HUB section of our website.
- Regular reviews of improvement and action plans to ensure they remain specific, measurable and achievable. Areas of responsibility should be clearly identified. This would support the service in moving forward and addressing identified areas for improvement.

National Care Standards, Early Childcare and Education up to the age of 16: Standard 14, A Well-managed Service.

Grade: 2 - weak

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

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

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

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

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	
22 Aug 2016	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
25 Aug 2014	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
15 Oct 2010	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
23 Nov 2009	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
11 Feb 2009	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good

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