

Ark Childcare Ltd Day Care of Children

Woodside Steading
Mosstowie
Elgin
IV30 8UW

Telephone: 01343 551664

Type of inspection:

Unannounced

Completed on:

31 August 2018

Service provided by:

Ark Childcare Ltd

Service provider number:

SP2004937981

Service no:

CS2004068093

About the service

Ark Childcare is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 90 children aged from birth to 14 years of whom no more than 75 children are aged 2 - 14 years and 15 children are under 2 years. The service was previously registered and registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

The service operates Monday to Friday from a spacious one level building situated in a rural area and with surrounding play areas that could be accessed directly from the building.

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 GIRFEC; safe, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible, and included (also known as SHANARRI).

The aims and objectives of the service include:

- integrated care in a single location that is flexible enough to provide the care parents require to manage their busy lives
- a safe, clean and fully equipped centre that is suitable for children aged from 12 weeks to 14 years
- enthusiastic, friendly and caring staff whose continual development ensures a quality learning environment and we also ensure they are safe to practice
- the highest standard of early years learning through well developed planning, observing and recording of children's experiences
- a service that ensures that all of the children in our care are looked after to current child protection standards.

What people told us

There was a total of 68 children present during the inspection although numbers fluctuated throughout the visit due to the nature of the service. The friendly and attentive interactions of the staff enabled children to be happy and confident. Children clearly enjoyed being out in the fresh air and the freedom awarded to join in active and energetic play. Specific comments from children included:

- 'I have not been coming to after school club for long but like being outside'
- 'I like using the climbing frame'
- 'I am drawing the sky, the sky is bright today'
- 'I am building a tower, it can go very high'
- 'I am drawing my mummy and daddy'.

Twenty one parents returned completed Care Standards Questionnaires (CSQs). We spoke with three parents face-to-face. They all told us that they liked the homely and welcoming approach of the service and the atmosphere was good. They found the staff friendly, a good mix of old and new staff who were caring. Specific comments included:

- 'I have nothing but praise for the childcare facility'
- 'Ark has a homely feel and staff are all friendly and helpful'
- 'I cannot fault the care and attention my son gets'
- 'I am happy that my child is safe and protected'
- 'the staff are caring and compassionate, management are very approachable'

'children enjoy playing outside'.

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 processes.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	3 - Adequate
Quality of staffing	3 - Adequate
Quality of management and leadership	3 - Adequate

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Children were being well cared for and the kind interactions of the staff helped to support their well-being. Parents told us that staff worked well with them, sharing information and listening to them, so partnership working was encouraged. Effective systems had been put in place to ensure that children's information and their personal plans were kept up to date for all children. We noted that a quick reference checklist in the folder for each of the rooms helped to promote consistency of care, promoting the national approach - Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). Whilst there was a system of review, amendments made to children's needs were not always clear. We suggested that this may be enhanced by parents being involved in completing a new plan when their child moved between rooms.

Children moved freely around the rooms and made choices about their play; they were able to socialise together and form friendships. The introduction of small group activities would help children with listening and to engage in a more meaningful way. Play resources and materials in the pre-school room provoked more interest and enabled children to learn better about self control, sharing and understanding each other's emotions.

Children were being better supported to progress their own learning through play; wider experiences supported exploration and problem solving. There was scope for improvement within other age groups; this was discussed in detail with the newly appointed manager and guidance for improvement was given. **(see Recommendation 1 in quality of environment)**

Snacks and meals consisted of a range of home cooked foods which took account of the nutritional guidance - 'Setting the table'. They complied with children's dietary needs and food preference, as identified by parents. So that mealtimes always provided a peaceful and positive learning experience, planning and management should continue to be monitored. For example, for babies/toddlers, staff positioned themselves at eye level so that they talked with them throughout the experience and responded on an individual level.

Children of all ages took part in outdoor play so that they had fresh air and their physical skills were being developed through movement and energetic play. We noted that pre-school children benefited from the introduction of spontaneous, free flow (indoor-outdoor) play, promoting freedom of choice. A weekly session in

adjacent woodland also involved children in their own wellbeing and development through exploration and learning about risk.

A child protection policy was in place and staff had an understanding of safeguarding procedures, as effective training had been undertaken. The knowledge the staff had of the children also enabled them to be alert to changes or any signs of stress.

Documentation was also in place for the administration of medication to support the welfare of the child. The management of medication should continue to be monitored so that safe practice was always in place.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

Children were being cared for in an environment that enabled them to feel welcome and comfortable. They were able to move around the play space, independently and safely. The service was clean and free from hazards; main exits were secured and there was an expectation that visitors signed in and out of the service. Good infection control practices were not always being adhered to in relation to nappy changing and respiratory hygiene and this was discussed with the manager. Children were learning about the importance of personal hygiene and how to keep healthy as they washed their hands after using the toilet and before having their snack and meals.

Staff ensured that children were treated appropriately should an accident occur as they had completed recent first aid training. Accidents and incidents were being appropriately recorded and information was shared with the parent/carer promoting the wellbeing of the child.

The premises provided ample space, however, we considered it could be better planned and used more effectively, particularly for the babies and younger children to help them develop and grow such as; space standards, suitable sleep equipment and environment, well resourced quiet/story areas. The children would also benefit further from real life everyday objects and natural materials being more readily accessible, providing open ended discovery and patterns of play that supported repetition and mistake making. Pre-school children would continue to benefit from a wider variety of readily accessible resources to allow them the freedom of selection and consolidation of learning. (**see Recommendation 1**)

The service had a great outdoor play area which surrounded the majority of the premises. Pre-school had choice between indoor and outdoor play which included natural and scrap materials, sand, water and a mud kitchen. An outdoor adventure area with swings, slide and climbing frame was well used by the school age children. Whilst the youngest children played outside in the fresh air they would benefit from materials to help with

exploration and creativity such as sand and water, with natural objects always been available. We were advised that the garden area for 0-3 years was being landscaped; this provided a perfect opportunity for a mix of surfaces and different space to be developed. Further consideration of the benefits of loose parts play was to be considered in respect of school age children. (**see Recommendation 2**)

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. Children should be able to enjoy a rich environment that has a wealth of interesting opportunities and encourages them to be imaginative, inventive and creative. This could be achieved through:

- a) play rooms that are well thought out and organised to promote independence and choice and enable children to display their achievements
- b) a variety of age appropriate resources/play equipment, that include natural materials are easily accessible for all children, to promote choice of play
- c) sleep equipment promotes safe practice, infection control and the overall wellbeing of the child
- d) re-evaluation and review of overall space and areas used, taking account of the space standards.

Further guidance can be found in the documents:

- Building the ambition - national guidance on early learning and childcare
- Scottish Cot Death Trust - early years safe sleeping for childminders or a nursery setting
- Space to Grow - design guidance for early learning and children and out of school settings - Section 2 - environment
- Our creative Journey

The above available at - hub.careinspectorate.com

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials (HSCS 1.31). The premises have been adapted, equipped and furnished to meet my needs and wishes (HSCS 5.16)

2. With a view to further promotion of a risk benefit approach, challenging play and exploration, a more stimulating outdoor play area should be made available to all the children through the inclusion of natural resources and scrap play materials.

Further guidance can be found in the documents:

- My world outdoors - sharing good practice in early years in how services can provide play and learning wholly or partially outdoors
- Loose parts play toolkit
- Our creative journey

The above available at - hub.careinspectorate.com

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials (HSCS 1.31).

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Staff were friendly and welcoming towards the children that helped to create an environment where children were comfortable and assured. Staff worked well together and appeared happy. They recognised the importance of supportive and positive relationships with the child and their family so that children's health and wellbeing were promoted.

Staff had protected time for planning in each of the rooms and they told us that this had made a difference as it was also providing an opportunity for planning and an evaluation of activities. An appraisal programme between the manager and staff had been established that enabled staff to reflect on practice and performance with actions to overcome any barriers being identified. The newly appointed manager intended to undertake appraisals with all staff, gaining an overview of strengths and weaknesses with a view to raising the quality of the provision. We suggested that a better planned induction programme related to experience of practice may also be beneficial.

The business manager was advised to implement a consistent approach to safe recruitment so that best practice approaches demonstrated that people with the right skills and values were recruited.

The majority of staff were experienced in childcare and held a relevant qualification. Core training such as child protection and first aid had resulted in effective practice being implemented to help children stay safe. Staff told us that they were pleased they had been given the opportunity to change and work with different age groups. However, staff had been given limited opportunity to reconnect/refresh skills related to children's development and the environment. This would help to make a difference to children's experiences and staff members' continuous professional development (CPD). (**see Recommendation 1**)

The lack of clear identification and record of staff training needs, both individually and collectively did not help with the support and monitoring of staff development. Staff would also benefit from leadership roles and specific responsibilities, perhaps linked to best practice guidance such as safe sleeping, outdoor play, expressive arts and building the ambition. This would help staff to be more self aware, invoke interest in finding out more to benefit their own CPD. A greater focus on practice and learning could be shared with the wider staff team to enhance the care and experiences of children. (**see Recommendation 1**)

Parents told us that they found staff friendly and approachable and that they always had time to talk about their child's day.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. Children should be supported to achieve their potential by an effective management that promotes leadership roles and is committed to providing on-going development and training of the staff team. This could be achieved through:

- a) the development of a central training plan that identifies individual and group learning needs that is effectively monitored
- b) an evaluation of training as to how it has improved outcomes for children
- c) assigned roles/responsibilities for staff linked to their knowledge/interests
- d) a focus on practice that is discussed and shared between all staff

Useful resource:

The Scottish Social Services Council – Step into Leadership

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes (HSCS 3.14). I am confident that people are encouraged to be innovative in the way they support and care for me (HSCS 4.25).

Grade: 3 – adequate

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

A new manager had been appointed; they were in the process of establishing their role and responsibilities as a manager. They recognised the value of continuous evaluation and having a shared vision of aims leading to better outcomes for children. The manager was motivated about their new role and it was clear they would be able to draw on and use their own experience of working in the early years sector and strive to develop leadership of change. The manager was due to commence the relevant qualification in the forthcoming week and was registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

The manager was supernumerary to staff ratios, in recognition that they needed sufficient time to establish their own skills, and to carry out continuous and meaningful observations and evaluations of all aspects of the service to sustain improvement.

We acknowledged that the previous manager had made a competent start in relation to self evaluation for improvement. The format being used was considered to be effective to measure the impact of success and agreed steps for improvement. It had included all staff so that they were being actively engaged in the process of evaluation. Embedding this practice would enhance a culture that valued staff and enable them to have a better reflection and open debate of what was needed to improve and how to improve. Whilst during our discussion with the manager there was some reference to parents/carers and children being involved, this was not evident within the evaluation documentation and guidance was given. The self evaluation framework How

good is our early learning and childcare (HGIOELC) should continue to be used for such purposes. (see **Recommendation 1**)

Parents told us that they also found the business manager and provider helpful and responsive in relation to any queries or issues. They valued the friendly relationships of the staff and the openness of the service as they were welcomed in to the premises at any time. Parents also liked the on-line communication and information that was shared with them.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. Continuous, rigorous and effective systems of collaborative approaches to self evaluation for improvement should be maintained, so that adjustments made lead to better outcomes that make a real difference for children.

Further guidance is available in the framework document: How good is our early learning and childcare

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: I am supported to give regular feedback on how I experience my care and support and the organisation uses learning from this to improve (HSCS 4.8) and I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes (HSCS 4.19).

Grade: 3 - adequate

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

Previous requirements

Requirement 1

The provider must make proper provision for the health, safety and wellbeing of the children attending the service by ensuring the manager is suitably qualified and demonstrates that they have the necessary skills and knowledge.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011/210 Regulation 4(1)(a) - Welfare of users and Regulation 7(c) - Fitness of managers

Timescale: to be commenced within 3 months of this report

This requirement was made on 25 August 2017.

Action taken on previous requirement

A new manager had been appointed, they had registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and had a date to commence the relevant qualification.

Met - outwith timescales

Requirement 2

The provider must ensure that the early years manager is supernumerary to staff ratios, enabling them to have sufficient time to become competent and confident in their role and implement practice and support that enhances outcomes for children and leads to improvement.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011/210 Regulation 4(1)(a) - Welfare of users and Regulation 7(c) - Fitness of managers

Timescale: within 24 hours of receipt of this report

This requirement was made on 25 August 2017.

Action taken on previous requirement

The manager was supernumerary to staff ratios.

Met - outwith timescales

Requirement 3

Effective and robust systems of self evaluation and improvement must be established for the purposes of reflection and analysis to make better provision for the children's wellbeing and learning.

This is in order to comply with:

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011/210 Regulation 4(1)(a) - Welfare of users

Timescale: to be commenced on receipt of this report

This requirement was made on 25 August 2017.

Action taken on previous requirement

Effective systems had been established by the previous manager.

Met - within timescales

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

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

Management and staff to further develop the format of children's plans for the out of school service to support the health and wellbeing of the children. All elements of the plan should be dated and monitored to ensure that the content reflects children's needs with a review at least six monthly.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the Age of 16: Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing

This recommendation was made on 25 August 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Plans had been put in place and a system of review had been established.

Recommendation 2

To further help children to learn, develop skills, confidence and self-esteem the staff with the support of the management should:

- a) be flexible in offering choices and resources inside and outside, that capture children's interest with the individual in mind so children direct their play and remain motivated
- b) ensure children are better encouraged to express their ideas and feelings and own theories through conversations, decision making and taking responsibility.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the Age of 16: Standard 4 - Engaging with children and Standard 5 - Quality of experience

This recommendation was made on 25 August 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Resources and experiences for pre-school children had improved.

Recommendation 3

To promote the wellbeing of the child through the correct exchange of information related to the management of medication, the manager should:

- a) ensure that an accurate record of the medication to be administered is held and contains written consent from parents
- b) ensure the dosage on the record of consent matches that of the original container
- c) ensure required medication is reviewed a minimum of 3 monthly
- d) affirm that all staff know and follow best practice guidance.

Further guidance can be found in the document 'Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services' (<http://hub.careinspectorate.com/>).

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

This recommendation was made on 25 August 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Practice and procedures for the administration of medication followed good practice.

Recommendation 4

Children should be able to enjoy an environment that has a wealth of interesting opportunities and encourages them to be imaginative, inventive and creative. This could be achieved through:

- a) play rooms that are well thought out and organised to promote independence and choice and display children's achievements
- b) a variety of age appropriate resources/play equipment, that include natural materials
- c) sleep equipment promotes safe practice, infection control and the overall wellbeing of the child
- d) re-evaluation of overall space and areas used, taking account of the space standards.

Further guidance can be found in the documents:

- Building the ambition - national guidance on early learning and childcare
- Scottish Cot Death Trust - early years safe sleeping for childminders or a nursery setting
- Space to Grow - design guidance for early learning and children and out of school settings

The above available at - hub.careinspectorate.com

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the Age of 16: Standard 5 - Quality of experience

This recommendation was made on 25 August 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The recommendation remained in progress and is therefore continued. See quality of environment.

Recommendation 5

With a view to further promotion of a risk benefit approach, challenging play and exploration, a more stimulating outdoor play area should be made available to the children through the inclusion of natural resources and scrap play materials.

Further guidance can be found in the documents:

- My world outdoors - sharing good practice in early years in how services can provide play and learning wholly or partially outdoors
- Loose parts play toolkit

The above available at - hub.careinspectorate.com

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the Age of 16: Standard 5 - Quality of experience

This recommendation was made on 25 August 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Whilst improvements had been made in relation to pre-school children, re-generation and expansion should continue. Further consideration need to be given in relation to younger children and school age children. The recommendation is partially met and therefore continued. See quality of environment.

Recommendation 6

The provider should ensure that the premises are suitably cleaned and furniture and fittings are effectively maintained to support children's health and wellbeing.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing and Standard 2 - Safe environment

This recommendation was made on 25 August 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Improvements had been made and the provider would continue to ensure it was maintained.

Recommendation 7

Staff need to be better supported by the management so that they are empowered to be creative and innovative, promoting a culture which values staff and enables them to improve their skills and knowledge, leading to improved outcomes for children. This should be achieved through:

- a) effective and planned individual supervision and appraisal
- b) organised and protected planning sessions
- c) staff meetings planned in advance with staff contributing to the agenda

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the Age of 16: Standard 12 - Confidence in staff

This recommendation was made on 25 August 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The recommendation had been actioned.

Recommendation 8

Children should be supported to achieve their potential by an effective management that promotes leadership roles and is committed to providing on-going development and training of the staff team. This could be achieved through:

- a) the development of a central training plan for staff, individuals and group that is effectively monitored
- b) an evaluation of training as to how it has improved outcomes for children
- c) assigned roles/responsibilities for staff linked to their knowledge/interests

Useful resource:

The Scottish Social Services Council - Step into Leadership

National Care Standards, 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 25 August 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Recommendation has been continued, see quality of staffing.

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
25 Aug 2017	Unannounced	Care and support 3 - Adequate Environment 3 - Adequate Staffing 3 - Adequate Management and leadership 2 - Weak
22 Sep 2016	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership Not assessed
23 Jan 2013	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 4 - Good
16 Nov 2010	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership Not assessed

Date	Type	Gradings	
3 Dec 2009	Announced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
3 Oct 2008	Unannounced	Care and support	3 - Adequate
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	3 - Adequate
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate

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