

Early Steps Nursery Day Care of Children

The Pyramids Business Park
Easter Inch
Bathgate
EH48 2EH

Telephone: 01506 636 394

Type of inspection:

Unannounced

Completed on:

12 March 2019

Service provided by:

Carol & Graham Armstrong a
Partnership

Service provider number:

SP2008009820

Service no:

CS2008177451

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 previously registered with the Care Commission and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

Early Steps Nursery is a private nursery situated in purpose-built accommodation located within a business park near Bathgate, West Lothian.

Early Steps Nursery is registered to provide a day care service to a maximum of 63 children at any one time aged between birth and P7 age.

The service operates between the hours of 07:30 hours to 18:00 hours, Monday to Friday. The nursery accommodation consists of a main atrium, which is used as an additional play area, cloakroom and dining room. This area leads to the other parts of the nursery, including the kitchen, office, staff room and five playrooms. The playrooms are arranged into the Baby, Little Paws, Big Paws, and Out of School/Holiday Club room. Some playrooms have direct access to individual garden areas and toilets. The Out of School room has its own entrance and toilet facilities. The gardens have a variety of fixed play equipment and mixed surfaces including paving and rubber safety. The children also use grassed areas to the front of the nursery building and a private woodland area within the grounds of the business park.

The aims of the service include the following:

NURSERY

- Care for children to the highest standards and provide a happy and stimulating environment where children feel comfortable, safe and secure.
- Provide a happy and fun environment for the children to play and develop.
- Encourage children of all ages to become confident individuals.
- Provide children's meals and snacks that will be well-balanced and healthy and will take account of each individual child's dietary requirements in line with the nutritional guidelines. e.g. Ethnic, Cultural, Allergies.
- Ensure staff will endeavour to build and maintain a good working relationship with parents/carers to enable all concerned to provide a good environment for their child to reach their full potential and develop their independence.

OUT OF SCHOOL

- Promote awareness of the importance of play.
- Provide and encourage the sharing of resources and equipment for play.
- Ensure children and young people have a strong voice in all matters that affect them through weekly group meetings.

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service. We want to ensure they have the best start in life, are ready to succeed and live longer, healthier lives.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (also known as GIRFEC). Set up by Scottish Government, GIRFEC is a national approach to working in a consistent way with all children and young people.

It is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. The approach helps services focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people - and what they can do to improve. Getting it right for every child is being woven into all policy, practice, strategy and legislation that affect children, young people and their families.

There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting It Right For Every Child. They are: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, and Included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI indicators. We use these indicators at inspection, to assess how services are making a positive difference for children.

What people told us

On the first day of the inspection 42 children attended the service. We observed children who were happy and engaged playing indoors and at times outdoors. Children were engaged in a wide range of freely chosen activities that supported their learning. Children played well together and were very supportive of each other. Some children talked to us about their time in the nursery and what they like to do there.

Comments from children included:

- "Snack is delicious."
- "I like playing with my friends after school."
- "Sometimes we get shouted at for shouting."
- "The ladies are fun."
- "Its really fun. You get to play dressing-up."
- "I feel safe here."

We provided the service with 21 Care Standards Questionnaires (CSQs) to distribute to parents/carers before the inspection. We received 12 completed questionnaires before the inspection. From the responses we found that eight parents/carers strongly agreed their child appears happy and confident with staff and 12 told us they received clear information about the service before their child started. Two parents did not know whether staff asked for their child's views about activities and outings. Comments from parents/carers were shared with staff during the inspection and included:

- "My child is very happy and well looked after."
- "The staff have all been amazing, so caring and supportive."
- "I am so pleased I picked Early Steps to help my daughter grow and learn."
- "Staff obtained the necessary training to support my child."
- "My son loves Early Steps and all the staff."
- "The bigger children in Little Paws would benefit from activity in the community."
- "Information sharing could be better. For example, electronic newsletter with a summary of activities undertaken."

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self-assessment in advance of the inspection. The service didn't have a current improvement plan and staff told us they didn't use best practice guidance to evaluate their environment or practice.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	3 - Adequate
Quality of environment	not assessed
Quality of staffing	3 - Adequate
Quality of management and leadership	2 - Weak

What the service does well

Staff provided children and their families with a welcoming and caring service. Staff communication with children gave the message that they were valuable, competent and appreciated. Children received praise and encouragement during play and individual achievements were recognised and celebrated. For example, older children had a 'Shout Out' board highlighting acts of kindness.

Children were offered appetising meals and snacks that were prepared on the premises. During our visit we spoke with the service cook who was clear about her role in helping to meet children's health and welfare needs. Meal and snack times were inclusive for children. Menus took consideration of children's allergies and colour coded place mats helped ensure children were safe because staff were clear about potential risks.

The routine of the day allowed time for extended play, both indoors and outdoors. Children in the Big Paws and Out of School care could freely choose indoor or outdoor activities which helped them develop their understanding, imagination, thinking, investigation and problem solving skills because they were leading their play. Older children also had access to natural and open-ended materials that assisted them to extend play. For example, in the Big Paws room children had a 'tinker table' where they could take apart and rebuild office equipment.

Staff gave children a feeling of warmth through appropriate physical contact, such as, cuddles and holding children's hands. Younger children, in the Little Paws room, were soothed to sleep by staff that responded to individual needs. Staff followed children's routines and were respectful of their preferences. For example, a newer staff member checked with other staff how children liked to sleep. We found staff followed safer sleep practice and that there was sufficient supervision provided.

Staff told us they were part of a supportive team and that management treated them respectfully. Staff had regular opportunities to meet in small groups during weekly team meetings and said that they could request one-to-one time with a member of the senior leadership team.

What the service could do better

Children did not always experience care and support in a planned and safe way. No system was in place to record medication stored on the premises and medication stored for children requiring it 'as and when' was out-of-date. See requirement 1.

The senior leadership team had enhanced child protection training, however, some staff were still unclear about their role in keeping children safe. In response to concerns for a child's welfare, we found that timely and effective action had not always been taken, systems in place to record concerns did not support the analysis of information, were not adequately stored and did not include follow-up actions, decision and outcomes. See requirement 2.

Clean toilet facilities were within reach of children, which for older children, promoted their independence. The service also provided care to children's in nappies. The environment, practice and facilities that supported nappy changing were not in line with current best practice guidance. To ensure the nappy changing experience is relaxed, safe and that children's right to privacy and dignity is respected, the service should further develop their current personal care procedure and ensure the areas used to provide personal care are suitable.

See recommendation 1.

<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/1623/space-to-grow.pdf>

<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/1558/nappy-changing-guidance-for-early-years-and-childcare-services.pdf>

At times staff were too focused on tasks, such as, cleaning tables and sweeping floors. This reduced the amount of positive stimulation children received. For example, children in the little paws room were encouraged to play in a small area of the room whilst all staff focused on cleaning. We also found hazardous liquid left within the reach of young children. We recognise the need to keep the environment clean, however, careful consideration should be given to staff deployment, with clearer defined roles and responsibilities (including visual safety checks), so children benefit from a safer environment and quality interaction throughout their day. See recommendation 2

Children of all ages need access to cosy spaces to relax and rest. The playrooms did not have dedicated space for rest. During feedback we discussed this with the provider and manager who agreed that children would benefit from spaces to relax and stated they would further develop this.

The service didn't have a current improvement plan and staff told us that they did not use best practice guidance to evaluate their environment or practice. The senior leadership team and staff should use best practice documents to evaluate and inform their improvement plan. For example, the Little Paws staff should use documents like 'Building the Ambition' to assess the care and play opportunities provided to make sure children have positive experiences that are suitable to their age and stage of development. See recommendation 3.

[https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/Early learning and childcare \(ELC\)](https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/Early learning and childcare (ELC))

The service did not meet their previous recommendation regarding children's personal plans. Personal plans were not subject to review at least every six months in line with current legislative requirements. The service should ensure that children's personal plans are kept up-to-date and reviewed with parents. See recommendation 4.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 2

1. In order to ensure that medicine is administered and stored safely, with recording systems that support safer practice, the provider must improve the current medicines management system to ensure it is robust, in line with best practice guidance and supports staff to keep children safe by 8 April 2019.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: As a child, 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) and in order to comply with Regulation 4.1(a), welfare of users- a provider must make proper provision for the health welfare and safety of service users, of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011.

2. To ensure that children and young people are kept safe the provider must ensure child protection practice is led by trained and confident staff, that systems for the recording and the analysis of information held are robust and that the service policy and procedure for the protection of children are in line with national guidance and legislation by 27 May 2019.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: As a child, I have confidence that I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities (HSCS 3.20) and in order to comply with Regulation 4.1(a), welfare of users- a provider must make proper provision for the health welfare and safety of service users, of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011.

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 4

1. The provider should further develop the service policy and procedure for nappy changing and ensure that areas used to provide personal care are suitable and in line with best practice guidance. The provider should consider:

- How is the privacy and dignity of children respected?
- How does area look and feels to a child? Is it warm, comfortable and pleasant?
- Is there enough space for adults and children to move around?
- What facilities and practice is in place to support good infection control procedure?
- What measures have been taken to ensure the changing area is consistent with best practice guidance?

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: As a child, if I require intimate personal care there is a suitable area for this, including a sink if needed (HSCS 5.4) and if I require personal care, this is carried out in a dignified way, with my privacy and personal preferences respected (HSCS 1.4).

2. The provider and senior leadership team should review all staff roles and responsibilities to ensure that;

- Children are kept safe and their needs met, at all times,
- Staff are clear about individual responsibilities and their role within improvement,
- Staff are deployed throughout the service based on skills, experience and level of responsibility,
- Leadership opportunities are identified to improve practice,
- Expectations are agreed and consistent,
- Common goals are developed with clear action plans.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: As a child, my care and support is consistent and stable because people work well together (HSCS 3.19)

3. We recommend that the service further develop quality assurance systems to have clear priorities which are focussed on outcomes for children. This could include:

- A clear and manageable monitoring calendar to look at the quality of provision,
- Reflection on staff practice and engagement with children,
- Direct observations of children's experiences, including interactions with staff,
- Proactive systems to source and research recent guidance and legislation,
- Clear action plans for staff to improve practice in any areas identified,
- Audit recording systems to ensure they support the work of the service and keep children safe. (personal plans, child protection and safeguarding, administration of medicine risk assessments),
- Continued use of evaluative systems such as 'Building the Ambition' or 'Achieving Quality Scotland,'
- Regular involvement of staff, parents and children in evaluating the quality of the service.

Referring to websites such as the Care Inspectorate Hub (<http://hub.careinspectorate.com/>) and Education Scotland's National Improvement Hub (<https://education.gov.scot/improvement>) will support the service to see recent examples of guidance in practice.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: As a child, I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance systems. (HSCS 4.19)

4. The service should ensure that personal plan information is updated at least every, six months, with parents or children, in line with current legislative requirements. Where there is an identified need, records should detail how this may affect the child and how staff will meet their needs.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: As a child, My personal plan (seomtimes refered to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices (HSCS 1.15)

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

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

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that the service ensure that care plan information is updated at least every six months in line with current legislative requirements. Where there is an identified need, records should detail how this may affect the child and how staff should meet their needs.

National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16 – Standard 6: Support and development.

This recommendation was made on 22 February 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation

We continue to recommend the service improves its current personal plans to ensure they include, where possible, the voice of the child and are reviewed with parents at least every six months in line with current legislation.

This recommendation is: not met.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
6 Feb 2017	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 4 - Good Staffing Not assessed Management and leadership Not assessed
13 Mar 2015	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 4 - Good
13 Feb 2013	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 4 - Good

Date	Type	Gradings	
8 Feb 2012	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
12 Jul 2011	Unannounced	Care and support	2 - Weak
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
12 Aug 2010	Unannounced	Care and support	2 - Weak
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
25 Aug 2009	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate

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