

First Steps Day Nursery Day Care of Children

Allandale View
Glasgow Road
Longcroft
Bonnybridge
FK4 1QN

Telephone: 01324 876949

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 March 2020

Service provided by:
First Steps Day Nursery

Service provider number:
SP2003002664

Service no:
CS2003011443

About the service

This service was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

First Steps Day Nursery is a privately owned service situated in Longcroft a few miles from both Stirling and Falkirk in Central Scotland. The service operates Monday to Friday and can accommodate up to 65 children per day. The service is in partnership with Falkirk Council to provide funded places for children aged 3 years to an age to attend primary school.

The building is a self-contained two-storey accommodation. The ground floor is currently being used to accommodate the children attending. Currently, there are two playrooms operating, a separate sleep room, kitchen, toilets, staff room and office available. The large fully enclosed garden provides opportunities for children to be active. Details of registered numbers of children can be found on the certificate of registration for the service.

The service aims include:

- "To provide a welcoming, happy, safe and secure environment for a child and their family."
- "To provide individual care, education and support for each child and their family's needs."
- "To promote good health in all children as well as physical and mental wellbeing and self-esteem."

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 Getting it right for every child: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

What people told us

During the inspection, we spent time with the children present, most were happy and enjoying their play. There were eight children in the over three's playroom and four children in the under three's playroom. They were keen to talk to us and told us:

- "I have friends in the nursery."
- "My favourite thing is the play dough; you need flour and oil."
- "I like playing with cars."
- "The nursery doesn't have any computers for the children, they are just for the teachers. The iPad doesn't even have any games or anything."

Comments from a child looking at their learning journal with us:

- "This is outside somewhere different; I like the big hill."
- "I remember that, that's me making a Christmas tree."

We sent out 22 care standards questionnaires to parents of children who attend the service. We received 11 completed questionnaires from parents before the inspection. We spoke with three more parents individually. On the whole, most parents appeared happy with the care and support their child received in this service. They told us:

"I always know my child is safe and protected while at nursery. The staff genuinely adore the children and always make us both feel welcome. I would not hesitate to recommend First Steps Nursery to others."

"The nursery is fab at suggesting fun and new activities for my child. They even helped my baby reach her first step milestone. Staff are consistent and know my child like one of their own."

"Our daughter loves attending First Steps and comes home excited to tell us about her day. She loves the access to the outside spaces and the themes studied (e.g. dinosaurs were chosen recently)."

"Since my son has started. I have never known the nursery to use the library. In two years the only trips he has been on have been to a park (not many occasions) and one pantomime."

"The noticeboard isn't always read due to being rushed at drop off and pick up. It would be helpful to have a newsletter emailed, rather than put on the Facebook page. "

"The staff in the nursery couldn't be any more friendly and welcoming. Such a nice, pleasant happy environment for it being a nursery and the atmosphere is calm and relaxed. I am more than happy dropping my little one-off. She has come on leaps and bounds since starting."

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self-assessment in advance of this inspection. We looked at the improvement plan. This demonstrated the priorities for development and how they were monitoring the quality of the provision within the service. For example, one priority was to develop staff confidence in self-evaluation.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	not assessed
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

What the service does well

There was a family approach to the service and staff knew children's care needs well. Children were happy, relaxed and appeared to be 'at home'. We saw loving relationships and staff interacted well with children, providing warmth and inclusion. It was clear that all children were loved.

Children were kept safe and healthy. Staff knew child protection procedures well. Similarly, good risk benefit assessments kept children safe and there were opportunities for active outdoor play in the garden. They were encouraged to take risks independently, or with support when required. There was a variety of opportunities to climb, balance and explore the mud area. Children learned about the benefits of taking appropriate risks.

There was a focus on healthy eating, and staff followed safe food practice guidance. Snacks and meals included fruit and vegetables, some of which children grew in the garden, such as, 'peas in the pod' and strawberries. This encouraged healthy eating habits and an understanding of where food comes from. We saw photographs of fun learning experiences using food, for example, making 'Allosaurus bagels'. Staff sat with children when they were eating and chatted to them, which helped to develop social language skills.

The service used an external catering company to provide lunches, which were prepared in line with nutritional guidance. The manager consulted with the company to ensure that nutritional needs were met, and food allergies were safely catered for. As a result, children were safe and healthy.

Emotional wellbeing was supported through nurturing relationships. Staff were responsive to the needs of children. They checked in with children, discussing and acknowledging how they were feeling. Children's achievements were recognised and celebrated in both rooms, using 'Star Moments'. The family tree displayed photographs of children with their families. This helped to reassure them when needing comforted. Children felt included and valued.

Photographs displayed on the learning walls showed the breadth of experiences offered. Similarly, consultation with children and children's views were evident in the floor books, which showed they were involved in decision-making and given choice.

Parents opinions were valued and there was an importance on consulting with parents. They had opportunities to meaningfully engage in decisions about improving the service. For example, staff used a consultation process to seek views on a specific question and made appropriate changes as a result of feedback.

The manager spoke positively about the benefits of being in partnership with Falkirk Council, who offered guidance, support and training opportunities. There were regular visits from the curriculum support officer, who supported with planning. The manager acted on advice given, for example, engaging with colleagues from other settings to develop an understanding of how to support progression in learning. Similarly, the manager told us that the partnership supported transitions from nursery to primary one. A shared topic gave children a similar interest when starting school. Planned programmes were structured, which would support children to develop confidence and build new relationships.

What the service could do better

The service had identified the need to develop planning for children's individual learning needs. With support from the local authority, a new planning system was being introduced, which would bring together identified learning needs and interests. We suggested that staff could support children's individual significant learning through effective use of observations. Next steps should inform future planning. Tracking sheets were developed which would enable them to show progression at an appropriate pace. Staff need to embed the new planning system and improve recording of children's learning with continued guidance from the local authority.

Children's learning journals could be more inviting for children and parents. For example, they could be improved by adding more photographs and samples of children's artwork. This would encourage children to recall and reflect on their previous learning. Similarly, the journals did not yet evidence learning and progression. The new planning system should support this.

All children had a personal plan, which set out how their needs were met. However, these were not reviewed in line with best practice to ensure children's current needs were being met. See recommendation one.

We reminded staff that long-term medication should be reviewed with parents at least every three months. Similarly, there was a need to improve administration of medication forms to ensure that all required information was included. We reminded staff that no medication should be stored on the premises, unless parents had provided it in line with guidance, this would include herbal creams. This would keep children safe.

Staff explored solutions to limit restrictions that prevented free access to outdoors, such as staffing levels. We asked them to work on finding a solution to ensure that children could choose when they would like to go outside. This would help them to make good choices and to be active.

There was scope for children to be challenged more in their learning. Staff should expect high levels of progress and could further promote children's creativity, extend their thinking and widen their skills. Children could be encouraged to be more independent, for example, independently following visual instructions to make play dough and being more involved in preparing snack. This would support them to develop valuable life skills. Similarly, learning could be enriched through improved use of digital technologies. This would support children to select and use appropriate technology to learn or solve problems with increasing confidence.

In line with service plans, we asked the service to continue developing quality assurance systems to show how evidence is used to improve outcomes for children. We suggested that this was done at a pace for staff to understand self-evaluation and legislation. This would help them to fully embed and sustain improvements made.

We suggested that the service develop their shared values in consultation with children and parents that reflects their commitment to ensuring best outcomes for children. We offered suggestions to make the improvement plan more achievable. For example, the service could break down the priorities into clear tasks, identify a staff member to lead each priority and have a clear timeline.

There was scope to improve recruitment procedures and we asked the manager to familiarise herself with the Care Inspectorate best practice document, 'Safer Recruitment through Better Recruitment'. Similarly, we suggested that there was a system put in place to make sure that all staff kept continuous registration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). See recommendation two.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. The provider should ensure that children's personal plans are reviewed and updated, with parents, in line with current legislation.

In order to achieve this, the provider should ensure that:

- the personal plan is reviewed when requested to do so by the parent or when significant changes occur
- an effective system is put in place to review and update all personal plans at least once in every six month period.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that, "My personal plan (sometimes referred 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)."

2. The provider should ensure that safe recruitment procedures are consistently followed and that all staff are fit and suitable to work with children. This should include staff having continuous registration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). In order to achieve this, the provider should:

- ensure that criminal record checks and references, consistent with current legislation, are fully carried out prior to staff starting
- have a manageable system in place to ensure staff have continuous registration with the Scottish Social Services Council
- that there are effective and supportive induction policies and procedures for all staff, prior to starting.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that, "I am confident that people who support and care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited (HSCS 4.24)."

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

There are no outstanding recommendations.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
11 Oct 2017	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership Not assessed
17 Sep 2015	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
25 Oct 2013	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
14 Oct 2011	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
16 Dec 2010	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 3 - Adequate
29 Mar 2010	Unannounced	Care and support 3 - Adequate Environment 3 - Adequate Staffing 3 - Adequate

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate

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Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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