

Stramash Outdoor Nursery, Fort William Day Care of Children

Inverlochy Mains
North Road
Old Inverlochy Castle
Fort William
PH33 6TQ

Telephone: 01631 566080

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 January 2020

Service provided by:
Stramash Social Enterprise

Service provider number:
SP2011011702

Service no:
CS2014323840

About the service

Stramash Outdoor Nursery, Fort William is a daycare of children service and is registered to provide care to a maximum of 32 children aged from 2 years to include those of an age to attend primary school during term time. The service should not exceed the maximum number of 10 children aged between 2 and 3 years of age at any one time. During school holiday times and inservice days, the care service may be provided to a maximum of 32 children from age 2 to 7 years.

The provider is Stramash Social Enterprise.

The service operates from their own designated outdoor area within Old Inverlochy Castle, near Fort William. A 'Yurkee' was erected on the site for warmth and shelter, along with outdoor toilets, nappy changing facilities and a portacabin for office space.

The service's aims include:

"To provide a safe and stimulating environment where children can feel happy and safe, encourage the development of the whole child - emotional, social, physical and intellectual, develop confidence and self esteem, encourage children to explore, appreciate and respect their environment".

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), 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 (also known as SHANARRI).

What people told us

On the first day we inspected there were five children aged two - three years and seven children aged three - five years present. On the second day there were four children aged two - three years and 16 children aged three - five years. During the inspection, we observed and spoke with the children. They had great fun sharing their views and experiences with us and socialising with their friends at lunchtime.

We were able to see how much they enjoyed the sensory experiences of their messy play, and the challenge, excitement and adventure of being outdoors, running and jumping in puddles, practising their climbing and balancing skills on wooden planks and drums, as well as making soup and potions in the mud kitchen and using their imagination and ingenuity with natural materials and loose parts to develop their play.

Staff were warm, kind and friendly. The children demonstrated resilience and their self regulation skills. They were confident about approaching staff should they need any help.

The two parents/carers we spoke with were happy with the service their child received. They felt involved and well informed and commented positively about the opportunities their child had been given to develop, learn and flourish.

We received three care standards questionnaires from the 30 questionnaires we asked the service to distribute to parents and carers before the inspection. Everyone was happy or very happy overall with the quality of care their child received. Everyone agreed the service had involved them and their child in developing the service and asking for their ideas and feedback. Not all parents agreed staff regularly assessed or shared their child's learning and development with them and used this to plan their next steps, or that they were kept well informed with what was happening. An issue was also raised about puddles being very deep at times on the site. This was all looked at as part of the inspection.

Comments we got back also included:

"Stramash is a wonderful experience and seeing my child's mud covered, smiley face everyday when I pick him/her up makes my day !"

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self assessment in advance of the inspection.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	3 - Adequate
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

Staff interactions were positive and caring towards the children. They knew the importance of providing warm, nurturing and responsive care to support children's wellbeing and development. We observed through staff practice that they were developing trusted and loving relationships with children to nurture and help them feel valued, safe and secure.

The management and staff were respectful, friendly and welcoming to all the children, families and to us. They knew children and their families well and spoke sensitively about children's individual care, learning and development needs.

Staff valued and were taking account of parents' knowledge and views of their child's development needs. An online personalised learning log was underway to track children's progress, celebrate their achievements, and help share their learning journey with their parents.

The personal plans we sampled and discussion with the manager confirmed work had begun to establish a more consistent approach to support planning with more detailed information needed and evidence of children's individual development needs and learning strategies linked to their next steps. A key area for development was staff making carefully observed assessments, that were meaningful and reflected

children's development and learning. This was to further support their planning, and ensure learning experiences had sufficient breadth, depth and challenge, with next steps focussing on areas to extend children's learning and help secure and sustain their progress over time. The manager agreed staff would benefit from further opportunities to strengthen and share knowledge on the long term impact that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can have on outcomes for children and their families. Wellbeing risk assessments should be a key part of their support planning, review and assessment process. Staff should consolidate how they plan, report and record on children's progress to establish clearer progression pathways that support their development and learning. We have made a recommendation about this.

When we observed the lunchtime experience for the children we found staff were working hard to create a relaxed atmosphere with resources that supported children to have a positive eating experience that was nurturing and well supervised. The manager and staff confirmed going forward they would continue to review, evaluate and monitor this closely. For further reference we signposted the service to our new guidance 'Food Matters nurturing happy, healthy children' and the NHS Health Scotland guidance 'Setting the Table'.

Staff knew what to do should they have any child protection concerns and who to pass the information onto. They understood the importance of refreshing their knowledge and understanding of this area of their work. As highlighted from the last inspection, they had updated their training. Plans were also in place for core training to be undertaken by new staff. Relevant contact details and user friendly information was displayed for parents and easily accessible for staff.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. Children's personal plans should be further developed and consolidated to support their wellbeing, development needs and progress. Plans should be reviewed and updated as children's needs, challenges and achievements change to enable staff to provide warm, nurturing and responsive care.

This is to demonstrate the Health and Social Care Standards, My support, my life, which state:

1.15 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.

1.19 My care and support meets my needs and is right for me.

1.23 My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected.

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

Staff were working hard to provide a learning environment that inspired children to be creative, curious and inventive, solve problems, make sense of the world and have fun. They understood the positive impact of outdoor play on children's development and learning, enabling them to flourish and have fun with a range of play experiences that enriched, deepened and challenged their learning. For example, using open ended materials, resources and loose parts play to help promote children's independence and natural curiosity, develop their physical agility, help build their resilience and self regulation skills.

Management and staff knew the importance of managing risk positively to promote children's independence and empower them to make safe decisions, develop their knowledge and self-awareness, as well as provide opportunities for them to contribute more of their ideas and experiences to their learning. They were implementing the balanced approach of a risk benefit model to further support children's learning, promote their independence and build their resilience, self confidence and enjoyment of risky play. On the day we inspected some deep puddles had formed on the site due to the very wet weather and snow. We discussed the risks this could pose for children and the manager confirmed a risk benefit assessment would be put in place without delay to support positive outcomes for children and their families. We also asked them to review their risk assessments for storing the bonfire materials they were collecting as part of their family engagement programme.

We also discussed the arrangements and facilities they had in place for toileting and nappy changing which were not consistent with current good practice guidance. For example, any screens being used to protect children's privacy and dignity in the toilets should be able to be properly cleaned. Handwashing facilities should be located within the nappy changing area. The manager agreed they would review their toilet and handwashing facilities in line with current good practice guidance. We also highlighted environmental health as a source of advice.

Since the last inspection, due to events over the past year outwith their control, significant changes had been made to their setting. For example, the building they previously had access to had been sold. Building work was now taking place close to the site to establish a community business and cafe. The fire that had destroyed their yurt on site had now been replaced with a 'Yurkee'. A portacabin had been erected on site to create office space.

We were able to see work was underway to create a covered area at the entrance to the site, along with a drying area. Plans were in place to repair the wooden bridge that connected the site to the woodland area. This was currently not in use as it was unsafe for children to use. Although the 'Yurkee' provided a cosy nurturing space for children to play, sleep and rest comfortably, it did not provide enough space should all the children need to seek warmth and shelter together from the weather. We have made a recommendation about this.

Due to the wet weather the site had become very muddy in places. Management recognised this could pose a risk to children's health, wellbeing and safety. As an interim measure some areas were being cordoned off until remedial work could be carried out. The provider confirmed groundwork plans were in place to address the issue.

We signposted the service to the updated guidance 'Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings', our guidance on 'Nappy changing facilities for early learning and childcare services: information to support

improvement' and the 'Space to Grow' design guidance for indoor/outdoor settings, early learning and childcare settings and out of school care settings.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. There should be more cosy, nurturing protective structures and spaces available for children to sleep and rest comfortably when shelter from the weather is needed.

This is to demonstrate the Health and Social Care Standards, My support, my life, which state:

5.20 I have enough physical space to meet my needs and wishes.

5.21 I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices.

4.11 I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

We recognised this was a new staff team, who were committed to building their knowledge skills and expertise and taking responsibility for their own continued professional development, as well as working well together as a team and embedding an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect within the service. We discussed how team meetings could be used to support and develop staff practice, giving them regular opportunities to self evaluate and critically reflect on their work. Management plans to re-establish a programme of staff support, supervision and development should be implemented along with more formal observations of staff practice and an audit of their training needs linked to their induction programme and individual supervision sessions. Staff training plans should take account of their strengths and personal development areas as well as the service's wider improvement planning goals. This is to build capacity within the team and support a continuous improvement agenda. We discussed how a more comprehensive induction programme should also be in place for staff to support them to be the best they can be and signposted them to the Scottish Government's new 'Early Learning and Childcare - National Induction Resource'. We have made a recommendation about this.

We also discussed how an ethos of shared leadership could be further promoted, with staff having lead responsibilities for developing different aspects of the service provision. For further reference, we signposted the service to the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) Step Into Leadership programme.

As part of our safer recruitment audit we sampled four staff files. We were able to evidence that full vetting and fitness checks had been completed for the most recent member of staff prior to them starting work. However, we were unable to complete the fitness checks for the remaining three staff members, as there was no paperwork readily available for us to view. The manager confirmed that the procedures used to recruit these members of staff safely and fairly, had not followed current legislation on protecting vulnerable groups or the updated national guidance 'Safer Recruitment through Better Recruitment'. For example, not all PVG scheme records had been returned prior to staff starting work. There were no procedures in place to track new staff registrations with the SSSC, to ensure the required six month timescale is met. We have made a requirement about this under the management and leadership theme of this report.

On the first day we inspected, although the service was meeting minimum staffing levels they were reliant on calling in sessional staff. This meant at times throughout the day, children were not able to freely access all areas of the site. We have asked the provider to monitor and review this closely. For further reference we signposted them to our document 'Guidance on adult to child ratios in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings'.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. A programme of staff support, supervision and development should be implemented that includes more formal observations of their practice, audits of their training needs, as well as a comprehensive induction programme and opportunities for them to self evaluate and critically reflect on their work. This is to build capacity within the team and support continuous improvement.

This is to demonstrate the Health and Social Care Standards, My support, my life, which state:

3.14 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.

4.11 I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

A new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) had recently been appointed for the provider organisation. In the short time he had been in post he had begun to address the concerns we had previously highlighted in relation to safer recruitment and safeguarding children.

It was evident from discussions with the new CEO and manager a key priority for improvement was to take a staged approach to quality assurance. They were in the process of re-establishing and implementing robust

and systematic processes and procedures to monitor and evaluate all aspects of their service delivery. The Health and Social Care Standards My support, my life would be included and embedded as part of the framework along with other key evaluation documents, resources and good practice guidance. For example 'How good is our early learning and childcare', 'Building the Ambition', 'Out to Play', 'Our Creative Journey' and our recently published guidance resource 'Self-evaluation for improvement - your guide'. We have made a requirement on safer recruitment and a recommendation on quality assurance processes and procedures.

We were able to see through their improvement plan that some work had started on child-led responsive planning and improving their indoor space.

The new CEO was also currently undertaking a review of their management arrangements to ensure there would always be the necessary on site managerial support and cover in place.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 1

1. By 30 April 2020 the service provider must demonstrate to the Care Inspectorate that they have robust safer recruitment policies and procedures embedded into their practice that follow and are in line with current legislation on protecting vulnerable groups. The provider should refer to the updated guidance 'Safer Recruitment through Better Recruitment'.

This ensures management and leadership is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state:

4.24 I am confident that people who support and care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited.

4.23 I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed.

4.19 I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.

4.11 I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.

This is in order to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011. SSI 2011/210, Regulation 9(1)(2) Fitness of employees and Regulation 13(1) Protection of vulnerable groups listings.

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The provider, management and staff should develop and implement robust and systematic quality assurance processes and procedures to monitor and evaluate all aspects of their service delivery. The Health and Social Care Standards My support, my life should be included and embedded as part of the framework along with other relevant evaluation documents, resources and good practice guidance.

This is to demonstrate the Health and Social Care Standards, My support, my life, which state:

4.23 I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed.

4.19 I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.

4.11 I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.

Grade: 3 - adequate

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	
15 Nov 2017	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
21 Aug 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good

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