

Vogie Outdoor Early Learning and Childcare Day Care of Children

Vogie Country Park
Gardener's Cottage, Vogie Country Park
Gorebridge
EH23 4NU

Telephone: 01875 821 986

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 May 2021

Service provided by:
Midlothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002602

Service no:
CS2019374676

About the service

This was a focussed inspection to evaluate how well children were being supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. We evaluated the service based on key areas that are vital to the support and wellbeing of children experiencing care during the pandemic.

This inspection was carried out by inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. We undertook this inspection using a site visit to the service and virtual methodology which includes the use of technology to inspect services. As part of this process we undertook the following:

- A site visit to the nursery on 20 April 2021
- E-mail request for information and e-mail to be sent to parents using the service
- Further virtual meeting with the manager using Microsoft Teams
- Feedback to manager and local authority representative using Microsoft Teams.

This service was registered with Care Inspectorate on 17 October 2019.

Vogrie Outdoor Early Learning and Childcare was registered with Care Inspectorate on 17 October 2019. The service is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 42 children from age three to not yet of an age to attend primary school at any one time.

The service is an outdoor nursery located within the grounds of Vogrie Country Park in Midlothian. Children spend their time outside, either in the walled garden or in the wider park area.

It provides care for children for up to three days a week (subject to availability), 49 weeks of the year. Drop-off: from 08:00 to 08:45 and pick-up: from 15:15 to 16:00.

The values and aims include:

Vision :

Learning and growing together through nature, nurture and play

Values:

Nurture, Respect, Growth, Inclusion, Positivity, Empowerment, Value, Support, Trust, Empathy, Professionalism.

Aims:

- Provide opportunities to develop the whole child, to develop and maintain positive relationships with staff, children, families and communities to support one another, improving overall wellbeing and build resilience
- Be rooted in the wider community and environment, respect and care for one another, invested interested in our natural world and its progression with a view to being environmentally aware/share
- Be excited about everyday experiences and learning, be proud of their achievements, take ownership and feel they belong
- Develop confident outdoor learners who understanding and can manage risk.

What people told us

We asked the service to issue an e-mail to parents to enable us to gather more information about how parents felt they and their children had been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We received 11

responses from parents. We used their comments as part of our evidence gathering for the inspection.

Most parents spoke very highly of the support they and their children had received from staff and manager during the pandemic. They commented that staff had used technology to remain connected to children which had helped children settle back into nursery on their return.

Most parents agreed that communication between the nursery and them was of good quality. This included the Facebook pages, e-mails, phone calls and the procedure which had been put in place to give feedback at the end of the day.

Some comments included:

I feel the nursery has done amazingly at supporting families throughout this difficult time. Practitioners are on hand supporting the children on their return to nursery and have helped to support my child's development and interests during our time at home.

It's a big reassurance to have a child at an outdoor nursery during this pandemic. Knowing that my son is out and about, and that when numbers increased the staff took care to make sure the children weren't mixing more than necessary, has been brilliant. I feel that he's had a normal nursery experience despite being in the middle of a global pandemic and am extremely grateful.

Overall they are very helpful teachers and very cooperative with parents.

I think during the covid outbreak as a nursery they couldn't have done anymore, the care and support they gave families was excellent. I am kept updated regularly by the nursery twitter page, pictures and observations on see saw app and a general chat at the end of the day. The staff at Vogrie are always willing to chat and will encourage my child to tell me what adventure she has been on that day.

I really can't be too positive about how wonderful they all are at Vogrie, their methods are so learner led and my child is so happy and settled there. I've seen huge improvements in their empathy and social skills, physical skills like climbing and their confidence since they started.

I can honestly say that Vogrie is a wonderful nursery, with wonderful staff. I am forever recommending it to any fellow parents that will listen. Having had two children attend indoor council nursery, my choice to send my child to Vogrie was absolutely the right one. They have absolutely thrived and the experience in an outdoor nursely has been nothing but positive.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	5 - Very Good
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Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?

5 - Very Good

5.1 Children's health and well being are supported and safeguarded during Covid-19

Children were happy, confident and having fun at the service. They received very respectful and nurturing interactions throughout the day which helped them feel safe and secure.

Effective communication with families supported children and parents to feel included in the life of the service during lockdown. The service successfully established a range of information sharing systems to engage with families. Staff sent out tailored activities to children during the pandemic and staff recorded voice messages on SeeSaw so children could remain connected to them. SeeSaw is an online platform that allows parents and staff to communicate with each other. Most parents confirmed that the use of regular email updates and social media supported them to feel informed of changes within the service.

Staff knew the children well and provided respectful, tailored support to meet their individual needs. Each child had a personal plan that identified if additional support was required. Although staff were completing these we have asked that they are regularly reviewed and audited to ensure they are effective and fully support individual children's wellbeing. Observations and next steps in learning are recorded on SeeSaw. To ensure children's development is progressed and their learning challenged we have asked the manager to audit and monitor these observations as part of an embedded quality assurance system.

Children had a good range of play opportunities. This included playing in the walled garden and then going out into the main area of the park. Children participated in growing their own fruit and vegetables, imaginative play and playing in the mud kitchen, they also had some literacy and numeracy resources and books to read in the walled garden. In the wider park, they developed their confidence and resilience through climbing trees, balancing on ropes, looking for wildlife and knowing how to care for it and the environment.

Children had opportunities to rest and hammocks were available for children who required a sleep. Children ate their food outside sitting on wooden logs or on a tarpaulin. Some children were tired at lunch time and finding it difficult to sit without back support. The manager has agreed to monitor this to ensure that children are comfortable when sitting on the ground to eat.

Snacks and lunches were provided for the children and additional staff helped deliver and serve the food. Plates were not provided at snack time and children did not have knives at lunch to cut their food. The manager stated there were checklists for staff to follow. To ensure staff are following best practice guidance we asked the manager to audit and monitor this as part of an embedded quality assurance system. A weekly lunch menu was being finalised. We have asked the service to ensure parents receive a copy of this as soon as possible.

5.2 Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff

During Covid-19, strict infection control procedures are important to keep children, staff and parents safe. Children were protected as staff took necessary precautions to prevent the spread of infection. Children had been supported to understand the need for good hygiene. Handwashing stations

were available throughout the setting, children were familiar with this routine and understood how to keep themselves safe.

Although staff and children were outside all day, staff wore face coverings when serving food, carrying out personal hygiene tasks or when they were working in any enclosed spaces. Parents also wore face coverings when dropping off or collecting their children. This good practice helped to minimise the spread of infection.

Practice within the service had been adapted so that physical distancing was being maintained between adults. Families had been kept well informed of new arrangements and any changes so that they were clear about the expectations of the service, and visual prompts at the entrance also acted as reminders.

Clear policies, procedures and risk assessments were in place to ensure a consistent approach to infection prevention and control by staff. Cleaning procedures were robust and displayed in various buildings within the nursery setting. Staff undertook cleaning of equipment and resources at the end of the session. Children's individual outdoor suits, toilet tents, nappy changing resources and hammocks were all cleaned or washed appropriately.

Children were looked after in small groups within zoned areas of the walled garden. This helped to protect their safety and ensured staff maintained social distancing. Children used this area well, were happy and having fun. However, when, on occasion, children are restricted to the walled garden in windy weather, staff should continue to ensure each cohort has access to a range of learning opportunities.

The manager was aware of the importance of regularly reviewing cleaning and hygiene procedures. This ensured that procedures continued to meet with guidance and are consistently applied to minimise the risk of infection.

5.3 Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during Covid-19.

Staff were very committed and connected to their work with children and families. They understood the importance of their role and this helped them to ensure children were safe, healthy and achieving. They were happy and content in their work which helped to create a positive and nurturing environment for all. There was a good balance of age, gender and experience within the staff team. This diversity provided children with some positive role models.

Staff were observed to have good relationships and communicated well as a team contributing to the smooth running and happy atmosphere of the day. Staff deployed themselves in a focussed and organised manner, but were flexible and responsive to the needs of the children and their colleagues.

The service was appropriately staffed to meet the needs of the children. A higher staff to child ratio was in place due to the setting being based outdoors. Additional tasks, such as cleaning, had been structured so that the care of the children and their quality of experiences had not been compromised.

Staff told us they were well supported by the leadership team and felt comfortable approaching them with any concerns. The manager understood the potential impact of Covid-19 on staff's individual circumstances and had implemented arrangements for promoting and supporting staff health and well-being. This fostered a supportive ethos within the service.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Children's health and well being are supported and safeguarded during COVID-19	5 - Very Good
5.2 Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff	5 - Very Good
5.3 Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19	5 - Very Good

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