

Wonder Woods Woodland Nursery Day Care of Children

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West Calder
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Telephone: 07753 471 951

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 July 2021

Service provided by:
Simply Play

Service provider number:
SP2010010947

Service no:
CS2019378222

About the service

Wonder Woods Woodland Nursery was registered with the Care Inspectorate in August 2020. Conditions of registration state that a day care of children service can be provided to a maximum of 18 children from age 2 years 6 months to not yet of an age to attend primary school at any one time. No more than 6 are aged 2 years 6 months to under 3 years. Adult: child ratios will be: Under 2s - 1:3 2 to under 3s - 1:5 3 and over - 1:8 if the children attend more than 4 hours per day, or 1:10 if the children attend for less than 4 hours per day.

The service is part of Simply Play, a social enterprise organisation providing out of school and holiday care throughout West Lothian. Based in Harburn near West Calder, the service is situated in a privately owned woodland. The service has access to a large forest floor and an orchard. A wooden cabin has recently been added to the site which offers an indoor toilet and kitchen area. Local bus routes to the site are limited however a car parking area is available.

The service states its aim as to:

"support children and provide them with the freedom to learn, play and grow in their natural world".

We carried out an unannounced inspection on Tuesday 27 July 2021 between the hours of 9:30 and 13:30. This allowed us to see the space where children were cared for and observe them in their daily routines with staff. We returned on Wednesday 28 July 2021 to speak with staff and the manager. Feedback was given by video call on Friday 30 July 2021.

As part of this inspection, we took into consideration Key Question 5 - Operating an early learning and childcare setting (including out of school care and childminders) during Covid-19 with a specific focus on Quality indicator 5.2: Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff. We will report on the overall performance of this indicator in Theme 1 Quality Care and Support.

What people told us

Seven children were present during the inspection visit. They were happy to show us around their space. Some of their comments indicated choice, knowledge of their environment and wonder of their surroundings. They said:

"The tadpoles have legs and we have to put them back to be frogs."

"I'm still hungry. Can I have an apple?"

"We look for the red raspberries to pick and that means they are ready."

"I found a shell. Maybe the wind blew it to wonder woods."

"I like the basket swing and I run about to get warm."

We invited parents to offer feedback about the service their child receives. Four parents responded by email. All parents appreciated their children being immersed in nature and learning about their environment. The areas identified by parents for improvement were discussed with the service during the inspection process. Some comments included:

"The whole set up is absolutely brilliant and certainly provides a setting where the children can immerse themselves in the nature around them."

"My daughter loves going to Wonder Woods and I value the experience I think she is getting; I only hope to see some improvements in communication with parents brought in sooner rather than later! This would enable us to be able to celebrate the achievements the children are having and spread the great work Wonder Woods is doing."

"I feel well informed about what is happening at the nursery through emails, the Facebook group and from speaking to the staff at the end of the day."

"The woods are a calm, peaceful place where the kids can feel safe, have fun, learn and explore. They learn so much more about nature than they would at a normal nursery. The kids get a real appreciation of the outdoors, how plants grow, the animals, fire, the river and feel really at home in the woods. And they get a lot of exercise too! It would be lovely to have an online learning journal but I feel like we know what's going on so I'm not too worried about it."

"I have seen progress in my child's speech, counting and vocabulary since she has attended."

"My only criticism would be the lack of communication. Nothing is provided outlining what they have done either at the end of the session or via an app for example as other providers do."

"The only thing I think could be improved would be maybe to get some pictures or updates online etc about what the kids do each day. It does also worry me occasionally that the site is not very secure. The path up to the woods could be improved too or at least marked out better."

"My child identifies different bugs and leaves when we are out walking, has told me about global warming! and is a lot more confident physically - jumping off things and exploring different areas."

Self assessment

The service was not asked to submit a self-evaluation prior to the inspection.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

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

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Children were relaxed and having fun. They used the staff for reassurance whilst exploring further into the site by themselves or with friends. Children were supported sensitively throughout daily challenges by problem solving, negotiating and encouraging. This helped them build resilience and confidence for tackling future challenges whilst supporting their emotional wellbeing.

All children had a personal plan setting out their health, welfare and safety needs. Care was consistent with home as staff worked alongside parents sharing information to meet needs. Children were understood, respected and involved in their own care as staff knew them well. The monitoring of children's learning was being developed. The service understood the importance of this for identifying progress, planning for further learning and sharing with parents. We advised the provider prioritise the implementation of a system so children's learning could be shared with parents.

Children's health needs were planned for and were familiar to staff. This meant that the right actions were taken at the right time to keep children healthy. We discussed adding more detail to health need plans to ensure all instructions were clear for staff. Medication storage and recording followed best practice for daycare of children's services.

Experiences for children around food and eating were positive. Children were offered a hot lunch provided by a local community café. They were involved in the menu planning in collaboration with the café. This involved discussing food they liked, exploring healthy foods and creating combinations for lunchtime. Children shared their views about the food during lunch, which were also shared with the cafe.

The risk of Covid-19 transmission was reduced due to the service predominantly being delivered outdoors. The service had taken steps to ensure staff, parents and children were adhering to the Covid-19 national guidance. We identified an area for improvement in respect of infection control procedures to support a safe environment for children and staff. This was to enhance the indoor toilet facilities, we have therefore reported on this area within the quality of environment theme.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

Children had free access to a large woodland area. Visible boundary lines were familiar to children, who took responsibility to remind each other and support children who were settling. Children were keen to show us their growing patch with strawberries and peas. They were able to tell us about the growing and harvesting processes. Other areas children could explore whilst being supervised were the orchard, the river-bank and the fairy den area. We saw children initiating these visits and leading the way for their friends. This demonstrated a sense of ownership for children and a confidence in the area they were familiar with.

The concept of safety was an underlying theme of the children's day. They were able to consider and take risks as staff had a calm, enabling approach. Children were continually challenged to think about risks and explore solutions. This was empowering and fun for them. Knowledge of the children allowed staff to be responsive and proactive in planning to keep each child safe.

Children had access to a range of resources around the site. Natural materials were prominent in all of the play spaces. This gave children opportunities to learn about their environment and be creative with what they could find. We discussed the importance of having experiences such as sand and water play available every day for children. We also asked the service to consider how to enhance children's choice and independence with play resources, for example art materials. The service was keen to further explore their role in creating inviting spaces to play for children.

Sleep and rest areas were being developed around the site. Staff were watching how children used these and were altering plans in accordance. This meant that children were leading on these developments. We discussed having a space which was clean and mud-free so children could take off their shoes and be warm. The team was already considering this and making plans for winter time with additional lights in the cabin.

The dignity and privacy of children had been considered. Nappy changing took place in a tent with the door facing away from the play space. Children could choose to use the indoor toilet in the cabin or the outdoor tent toilet. These toilets were familiar to children who used them confidently. The cabin toilet did not reflect best practice around health and hygiene. We asked the service to further consider how the indoor toilet could be enhanced regarding handwashing, ventilation and children's independence (recommendation1).

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The service could further consider how to enhance children's health and wellbeing when using the cabin toilet, specifically but not exclusively related to:

- Handwashing taking place inside the toilet to avoid contamination of resources between the toilet and the current handwashing sink outside
- Ventilation of the toilet, including a toilet door, to avoid unnecessary smells in the cabin
- Children should be able to access the toilet independently

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard 4.11 which states "I experience high quality care and support based on relevant guidance and best practice" and standard 5.18 which states "My environment is relaxed, welcoming, peaceful and free from avoidable and intrusive noise and smells" and standard 5.2 which states "I can easily access a toilet from the rooms I use and can do this when I need to".

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Children were cared for by positive adults who were sensitive to their needs. They were understood as staff spent time listening and watching, noticing what children were telling them. Staff were present with children at their level. This demonstrated an understanding of connections and their role in helping children feel secure and happy. A positive ethos about the natural environment was being fostered. Staff modelled enthusiasm and resilience for children in their care. Children were curious and respectful of their surroundings as staff demonstrated a commitment to learning outdoors.

Children were protected as staff were recruited in a safe way. The service worked within their child ratio and were able to meet all children's needs. Children's freedom of movement was supported as staff communicated well with each other with the use of radios. Staff were consistent for children's wellbeing. This also ensured any covering staff were familiar with the routines and practical tasks of the outdoor setting.

Training was accessible through the organisation and staff felt supported to attend. Staff were able to evidence how recent training had influenced service improvements such as the Bookbug project. They felt supported and appreciated in their work. Regular support and supervision sessions offered opportunities to reflect on their work and challenge themselves with new goals. Having a competent, motivated team contributed to enhanced provision for children.

Children's care and support was being guided by national best practice documents. Staff kept themselves up to date and knowledgeable through team discussions and challenging each other. Their knowledge was demonstrated in their interactions with children. As the staff team looked towards further developing children's learning opportunities, they welcomed training and guidance from the local authority. This would support them to plan for and evidence progress in children's learning.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The first year of operation saw the service putting energy into developing a culture and ethos of security for families and ownership for the children. Relationships were built and secured, whilst routines were being trialled and established. The focus had recently shifted to the development of a quality provision. The service took part in development days with much involvement of staff, shared leadership and developing interests and skills. Reflecting on how the past year had gone helped the service to plan for further improvements. The service recognised the need to involve parents and children in this process and were considering how to progress with this.

The service had had a recent change in manager. The impact of this was reduced through the input of the Simply Play area manager, offering guidance, support and consistency. As the new manager settles into her role, she would benefit from continued guidance and support. This would help her to understand a managers statutory responsibilities within a registered daycare service. We referred her to the `records services must keep and notification guidance` for further information.

The service was working closely with the local authority to deliver funded hours. A plan to further improve the training of staff and play provision for children had been developed in partnership with them. The improvement plan reflected the findings of the inspection. This demonstrated a capacity to identify development areas and make plans for improvement. Some quality assurance processes were in place such as the manager carrying out spot checks on personal plans. We would encourage the service to use the new Quality Framework for Daycare of Children, Childminding and School Aged Childcare. This would support the service to plan, monitor and review all aspects of quality care as they implement their improvement plan.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

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

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.

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