

Woodland Outdoor Kindergartens – West End Day Care of Children

137 Crow Road
Glasgow
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 April 2023

Service provided by:
Debison Albie Limited

Service provider number:
SP2009010399

Service no:
CS2015336710

About the service

Woodland Outdoor Kindergartens - West End provides a care service to a maximum of 32 children aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school at any one time. The care service provider is Debison Albie Limited. The outdoor kindergarten operates mainly from woodland areas within Dawsholm Park as well as base premises on Crow Road. The base premises are used as a drop off and pick up point for children and parents and in adverse weather conditions. A minibus takes children from the base to the woodland environment a short distance away. The base premises are close to shops, schools, transport routes and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Friday 14 April 2023 between 08:00 and 13:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with several children using the service and reviewed survey responses from 4 parents whose children attend the service
- spoke with the senior management team and four staff
- observed practice and staff interactions with children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children benefited from a skilled staff team who worked very well together and had created a welcoming, inclusive environment.
- Positive working relationships between the manager team and staff promoted a collegiate approach to providing high quality play experiences for children.
- Children experienced interesting and motivating play and learning opportunities within creative outdoor spaces.
- Children were spoken and listened to in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included.
- The manager's leadership approach had helped build, maintain and strengthen the capacity of the team to deliver continuity in children's care.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes enabled the service to deliver high quality care and support tailored towards children's and families' particular needs and choices.

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, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require significant adjustment.

1.1 Nurture, care and support

We looked at how the service's planning approaches for children's care, learning and development ensured they experienced positive outcomes. Children benefited from a skilled staff team who worked very well together and had created a welcoming, inclusive environment. Their sound knowledge of child development, GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child) and the well-being indicators resulted in children's individual needs being met. We observed staff being responsive to children's changeable interests and demands. Children were spoken and listened to in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included.

Staff worked closely with families, involving them in decisions about their child's care and development. This enabled the relevant staff to respond quickly, sensitively and compassionately to changes in a child's life. Staff were skilled in using the information in children's personal plans to meet their needs. Personal plans and learning story journals using the SHANARRI (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included) wellbeing indicators and the Early Level of Curriculum for Excellence were regularly reviewed and included targets for achievement and next steps. Staff told us how they worked with parents to ensure personal plans included the key information needed to provide appropriate care, meet any medical needs and take forward children's learning and play interests. One parent commented: "The staff have provided genuine care and love for my child which has allowed her to settle really quickly. As well as supporting her general development (patiently toilet training), they have supported her to understand risk, develop her self-confidence and get the most out of her nursery experience. We have been involved in creating care plans for her which are meaningful and carried out. The reports provided are simple to understand but demonstrate that the staff really spend time getting to know each child and what they have accomplished over the period."

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of the policies and procedures in place to ensure care and welfare of children including child protection. All staff received regular professional learning in safeguarding and understood the indicators that may suggest a child is at risk of suffering harm. We signposted the management team to our organisation's "Practice guide to Chronologies" and discussed how this could be used to enhance the robust systems already in place for monitoring and maintaining child protection records and support the continued safeguarding of children.

1.3 Play and learning

We found that staff promoted a culture within the service that focussed on promoting the children's right to play, have fun and experience challenge. Staff worked hard to provide high quality learning experiences by continuously promoting choice, children's interests, as well as tracking and reflecting on individual achievements. We found that children's voice was highly valued. Staff took time to extend conversations with children about their play and used well-timed open ended questioning to further extend and challenge thinking and learning. We found that staff used observations of children's significant play interests to adapt their support for and resourcing of play experiences. Through discussion, it was evident that staff had a shared understanding of child development and early years pedagogy and used this to scaffold and shape the breadth and depth of children's learning. We highlighted to staff the value of ensuring written

comments on potential lines of development for children's play and related future play challenges are set out clearly as part of each learning journal observation. Staff had high aspirations to enable children to be successful. As a result, children were confident, happy and motivated to learn.

We discussed with staff strategies and observation approaches for developing children's sense of ownership of leading change related to their self chosen play projects. Staff agreed that more flexible use of planning tools based on observations of children's most engaging and involving play experiences could strengthen existing opportunities for children to shape their play environments. This can extend opportunities for staff to reflect on when children display deep level engagement in their play and support them to provide greater autonomy and choice as to how this will be taken forward.

We discussed daily routines with staff and found that these would be enhanced by increasing opportunities for children's free-flow play and reviewing the balance of time spent on large group adult directed experiences. We highlighted the value of broadening children's play experiences by extending play resources available within each woodland camp. Staff agreed this would enhance the play opportunities already in place that develop children's collaborative play, problem solving, imagination and creativity.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require significant adjustment.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The service made very good use of available resources to create a motivating environment for children to play together. Play spaces included a range of open-ended and natural resources to stimulate children's creativity and problem solving. Staff ensured spaces were set up in ways that were adaptable and had potential to encourage children's sustained shared thinking.

We found that children's ideas and reflections on their play spaces were used to support children's play plans within the outdoor play environment. We found that staff routinely shared their reflections on how setting up and monitoring of each base camp area led to challenging and engaging play opportunities for children. This helped to ensure that the outdoor play experiences offered excitement, engaged children's interests and appeared challenging to children. One parent commented: "We love our child being outdoors all day and feel this has been hugely beneficial for him. We also feel he has become a lot more confident physically after climbing trees etc all day!" Another parent told us: "We love the Family app for picture updates from the adventures in the woods. The learning observations are great too and it is wonderful to see how the staff use the woods for experiential learning opportunities."

Children's safety was promoted through detailed risk assessments for all environments and activities accessed by them. Staff engaged children in meaningful discussions about safety outdoors and children's ability to assess and manage their own risks during woodland play. All risk assessments were regularly reviewed and staff were aware of their responsibility to identify and remove any new hazards in the way of children's safety and wellbeing. We discussed with staff best practice steps to be taken in relation to storage and disposal of hand towels and monitoring of handwashing. Staff agreed that these would enhance robust infection control practices that were in place within the setting.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require significant adjustment.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The senior management team promoted a shared vision for the setting that reflected the aspirations of children, families, partners and the wider community. Positive working relationships between the senior management team and staff promoted a collegiate approach to providing high quality play experiences for children.

Staff told us how the manager and depute manager provided a clear focus for their shared team work through team meetings including setting out clear responsibilities and expectations. We found that the leadership approach followed had helped build, maintain and strengthen the capacity of the team to deliver continuity in children's care. It had contributed to children's emotional health and wellbeing being a major focus on transitions into the setting. This ensured the care children experienced was delivered by familiar key adults who were perceived as consistent, reliable, trustworthy, and responsive to their needs.

The staff team worked together very effectively to evaluate and reflect on their practice. The management team told us how they dedicated time to analysing children's, staff and parents' contributions to any consultations and extracting the key messages or themes. We found that these self-evaluation processes enabled the service to deliver high quality care and support tailored towards children's and families particular needs and choices.

We highlighted the value of ensuring any supervision and support meetings with staff led to written agreement on specific improvement or development goals that meet the professional development need of individual staff as well as the improvement priorities of the service as a whole. Staff were keen to use professional learning opportunities to help them take forward current ideas, develop and implement best practice guidance. We found that staff were highly motivated, well led and passionate about improving outcomes for all children. This resulted in children experiencing high quality interactions and a broad range of stimulating play experiences centred around their emerging interests.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require significant adjustment.

4.3 Staff Deployment

Effective staff deployment across the service meant that children's individual needs were being met by the right number of staff throughout almost all elements of the day. The staff to child ratio allowed staff to be responsive to individual needs which enhanced children's experiences and ensured children had the right support at the right time. Children who required additional support were well supported by staff to feel respected and included in daily experiences. This was enhanced through effective working relationships with families.

A robust induction process supported newly appointed staff to meet children's needs. The induction programme helped new staff to settle into their role and become part of the staff team. As a result, they were clear about their roles and responsibilities which supported children's experiences.

The staff routinely engaged in a range of professional learning activities that built on and sustained their practice. This included: trauma skilled practice, exploring autism in the early years, the art of open-ended play, building on children's emerging literacy, celebrating neurodiversity, and Froebel training. We found staff were confident in discussing how they had improved their practice as a result of their own professional learning activities. We highlighted to the senior management team the value linking staff development opportunities to a variety of leadership roles within the team. This can strengthen the leadership capacity within the team and help ensure staff take forward new initiatives that support children to consistently have experiences and outcomes which are as positive as possible.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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