Wellside Kindergarten
Day Care of Children

12 Wellside Place
Falkirk
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Telephone: 01324 626 668

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 November 2024

Service provided by:
Wellside Kindergarten Limited

Service provider number:
SP2003002693

Service no:
CS2003011505

About the service

Wellside Kindergarten is a daycare of children service situated in Falkirk town centre. The service occupies a detached converted Victorian house and is registered to provide care to a maximum of 48 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. Of those 48 no more than 15 children are aged under two years; no more than eight children are aged two years to under three years; and no more than 25 children are aged three years and over.

The service has separate play rooms to accommodate each of the various age groups of children. Children benefit from a very well-considered layout indoors and outdoors. There is space within the setting for children to play, rest and sleep. The fully enclosed and very well equipped garden at the rear of the property is shared by all children in the service. The service makes very good use of the local community and is close to transport links and local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 12 November 2024 between 08:45 and 16:30, and Wednesday 13 November 2024 between 08:45 and 11:45. We provided feedback on 13 November 2024. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children in the service
- reviewed digital responses from 32 families and 10 staff
- spoke with three families in person
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and interactions with children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

• Children experienced exceptional levels of nurturing care and support.

• A calm and relaxed atmosphere supported children's overall wellbeing.

• Staff had extremely high aspirations for all children and their families.

• Children were empowered to have fun as they wallowed in play and learning opportunities at a pace that was right for them.

• There was excellent performance in relation to quality assurance procedures which were embedded and effective in supporting continuous improvement.

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?	6 - Excellent
How good is our setting?	6 - Excellent
How good is our leadership?	6 - Excellent
How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent

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

How good is our care, play and learning? 6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support
Children and families experienced an excellent service that placed them firmly at its heart. Positive relationships and strong connections between staff, children and families had been established and were sustained. Staff had a deep understanding of the importance of relationships and this was a key priority within the service. The focus and research carried out by the service into 'professional love' contributed to the exceptional levels of nurturing care and support experienced by children.

All families agreed or strongly agreed that they had a strong connection with the staff caring for their children. One family told us, "I feel they genuinely care for my child. Feedback is thorough, personalised and not prescriptive which allows for real conversations with staff and relationships to be built." Another family said, "Staff truly offer a home from home environment and are so kind and caring. It is the best feeling knowing we can trust to leave our girl with such a wonderful team." These comments and sentiments were echoed by all families who responded to our questionnaire. The compassionate and highly responsive care received by children meant that they felt loved and secure as their overall wellbeing was supported.

We considered mealtimes to be sector leading and supported experiences for children which were of outstandingly high quality. For example, children were given a variety of opportunities to prepare, cook and eat meals outdoors. Children, families and staff told us how much children enjoyed cooking their lunch on the purpose built firepit. An outdoor pizza oven was another favourite with children. Families were invited into the setting to join this exciting and innovative lunchtime experience as children prepared and helped to cook lunch for them.

Older children were confident and had a clear understanding of lunchtime routines. They were keen to help by setting tables for their friends with placemats and cutlery in the sheltered outdoor eating area. Independence skills were further encouraged as children confidently poured drinks and tidied away their dishes when they had finished eating. A rolling style lunch meant that children could choose to eat when they were ready, promoting children's choice. As a result, children's opportunities for play and learning experiences were uninterrupted. Staff sat with children as they ate and recognised this as a rich opportunity to engage with children as they chatted happily about their morning. Younger children were very well supported by staff who were nurturing and sensitive to children's individual needs and preferences. These carefully considered approaches ensured children experienced very high quality mealtime's that were unhurried, sociable and relaxed.

Staff worked in partnership with families to gather important information about children's individual needs. Children's views were valued by the service and their voices were visible in 'What matters to me' information which took account of SHANARRI wellbeing indicators (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included). The wellbeing indicators were skilfully brought to life for children and families through the creative use of characters and stickers developed by the service. Children had a very good understanding of what each of the characters represented and spoke confidently about them. The service had created 'bitesize' booklets for every child which provided staff with an overview of

children's preferences and routines. This highly effective approach supported personal planning processes and enabled continuity of care between home and nursery.

Children's emotional security and wellbeing was very well supported through carefully considered and sensitive arrangements for sleep routines. Staff were dedicated and committed to getting it right for all children. They worked exceptionally hard and reached out to develop positive working relationships with experts and external agencies, such as Sleep Safe Scotland, as they reviewed policies and staff practice. T hey shared findings with the whole staff team, and with families in a meaningful way which promoted children's rights. This ensured children experienced a safe, consistent and dependable approach to care routines which were reflective of individual needs and family wishes.

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children benefitted from very well considered and creative learning opportunities. Skilled staff provided high quality experiences and beautifully presented resources to provoke children's natural curiosity and enquiry, indoors and outdoors. Staff were responsive to the needs and interests of all children. Their flexible and adaptable approach promoted in the moment planning. For example, children in the middle room had been deeply curious as they explored reflections in the playroom. As children moved outdoors we observed staff sourcing and gathering a variety of interesting, shiny objects to enhance and extend what was already available in the garden. This interest was continued into the afternoon when children returned to the playroom. As a result, children were empowered to have fun as they wallowed in play and learning opportunities at a pace that was right for them.

Staff had extremely high aspirations for all children. Children's learning and progress was recorded through carefully considered observations and shared regularly with families in learning folders, floor books and wall displays. Children were delighted to proudly show us their learning stories, and spoke confidently about what they had learned.

Children's learning and wellbeing was carefully tracked through quality assessments. Gaps in children's learning experiences were effectively identified and specifically planned for. This ensured children's successes and achievements were maximised as they were supported and appropriately challenged to reach their full potential. One family told us how staff supported their child, "They pay close attention to interests and find creative ways to incorporate their interests into building on their developmental milestones."

Children were independently leading their own learning. We observed many children engaged in play for sustained periods of time. Staff were very perceptive and highly attuned to younger children's non-verbal cues. They knew all children very well and provided exciting opportunities to encourage children's interest and participation. The large outdoor play space had been thoughtfully considered and designed to offer children excellent opportunities to have fun and develop their imagination with friends and siblings.

The service had an excellent understanding that outcomes for children significantly improved when families are involved and engaged in their child's learning. Staff and management had high aspirations for families and worked closely with them as partners to ensure children had the best possible start in their learning. They invited parents and carers to attend workshops such as, woodworking, phonics, and provocations for play. This supported families to further develop their understanding of the benefits and importance of play.

The service also regularly facilitated paediatric first aid training sessions for families, as well as all staff. This outstanding approach had earned the service a 'Millies Mark' award. Millie's Mark is an exceptional achievement for a childcare setting, as it shows they are going above and beyond minimum requirements in keeping children safe.

How good is our setting? 6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities
Children benefitted from a very well designed, thoughtfully considered, and comfortable nursery environment. Playrooms were furnished and resourced to an exceptionally high standard and were sensitively structured to take account of children's age and stage of development. There was a vast array of interesting, beautifully handmade, and natural resources available for all children to promote enquiry and provoke curiosity and learning. Photographs and attractively presented wall displays throughout the service immediately provided children and families with a sense of being welcomed and belonging.

The service was delivered from a converted Victorian villa which was homely and cosy. The Hygge approach, studied by staff, could be recognised in the calm and relaxed atmosphere which supported children's overall wellbeing. The layout of the setting meant that children did not have direct access to the garden. Careful planning, and additional staff, ensured children's right to choose was promoted as they independently accessed playrooms, toilets and the garden area.

The fully enclosed and secure outdoor area offered outstandingly high quality, stimulating play and learning opportunities for children. The large garden area was accessed by all children in the setting and had been developed, with significant investment, over a sustained period of time. Staff and children were provided with all-weather outdoor clothing to ensure they were warm and comfortable all year round. There was an extensive selection of exciting resources and experiences for children of all ages and stages of development. For example, the woodwork shelter was enjoyed by older children as they designed and built structures, such as a hedgehog house, which sat at the entrance to the setting. Younger children were offered opportunities, appropriate to their stage of development, to learn skills using these tools as they hammered nails into pumpkins at Halloween. We observed children giggling and experiencing joy as they happily climbed the tree, played on swings, rode bikes and scooters around the track and developed important social skills. Inviting cosy, quiet areas had been created both indoors and outdoors where children could rest and relax when needed. Children told us that they liked playing in the garden with their friends. One child said, "I love the swings. I love the slide." Another child told us they liked, "riding on my bike in the garden."

Children enjoyed challenging and fun play experiences in a safe way. Risk assessments and daily checks were carried out to promote a safe environment for all children. Staff demonstrated a very good understanding of Care Inspectorate's 'Keeping children safe - look, think, act campaign (SIMOA)'. Staff invited children to join them as they ensured the outdoor area was safe and secure. The creative use of a soft toy named 'Simoa', held by children, and a Simoa tabard provided a visual prompt to support discussions with children. As a result, children were learning important life skills as they developed an understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

Children experienced a clean, organised setting that was very well maintained. Staff had a very good understanding of the importance of cleaning within the service. The playrooms were ventilated throughout the day and offered children lots of natural light. Infection control routines were thorough and were strongly embedded in practice. This helped to minimise the potential spread of infection and supported a safe environment for children. Staff sensitively reminded and supported children to wash their hands at various times throughout the day. An outdoor hand washing sink enabled children to eat lunch outdoors more easily and reduced interruptions in their outdoor play. This meant children were cared for in a safe environment where their wellbeing was prioritised.

How good is our leadership? 6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

Quality Indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvements are led well
We found outstanding and ambitious leadership within the service. The vision, values and aims were clearly embedded and fundamental to the strong, successful relationships throughout the service.

Staff were supported and encouraged to develop skills, knowledge and confidence in their capacity to support children and families to reach their full potential. The positive culture supported enhanced staff engagement as they felt empowered to take an active 'champion' lead role on nursery improvement priorities.

Staff enthusiastically shared information about 'champion' roles with us. They spoke knowledgably about their research, the positive impact on children's experiences, and plans for the future. All champions were responsible for leading professional discussions and staff reflections, and measured the significant positive impact on children's learning outcomes. The strong ethos of continuous improvement enhanced the delivery of high quality practice. This resulted in an extremely motivated staff team with high aspirations and a strong desire to continually improve outcomes for all.

Improvement priorities were based on collaboration with children, families and staff. The management team took every opportunity, and used a variety of ways to seek and gather their views to inform the development of the service. Continuous reflections and evaluations were also considered and further supported improvement. As a result, the nursery improvement plan was targeted, meaningful and focused. This meant improvements in the setting were leading to outstanding care and support tailored towards the needs of children and families.

Self-evaluation was embedded in practice and informed future improvement priorities. The management team had an excellent understanding that self-evaluation was the responsibility of all. They demonstrated how self-evaluation had enabled them to deliver consistently high quality care and support to meet the needs of children and their families. This was achieved through a measured and planned approach which had led to a positive culture of critical reflection throughout the service. As a result, improvements in the setting were having a highly positive and sustained impact on children's care, play and learning.

The inspirational leadership team had developed a variety of meaningful ways to gather and record measurable information. Conditions were created within the service where staff felt confident to initiate well-informed change and had shared responsibility for this process. We were confident that these excellent practices were sustainable and that outstanding outcomes for children and families were delivered as a result.

The forward thinking management team had embraced new staffing legislation, 'Health and Care (Staffing)(Scotland) Act 2019' and were innovative in their approach to introduce elements of the 'Act' to staff. Staff recorded evaluations of training they had undertaken and the impact this had on their practice. They identified future training needs and were pro-active in sourcing learning opportunities. The service had invested in staff wellbeing and development through membership with the National Day Nurseries Institute of Education. This contributed to outstandingly high quality experiences and positive outcomes for children.

How good is our staff team? 6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent, where performance was innovative and sector leading.

Quality indicator 4.3 - Staff deployment

The service demonstrated a sector leading approach to staff deployment that ensured children were nurtured and very well supported in their play and learning. Staff were deployed in a manner that demonstrated a breadth of knowledge, skills and experiences to support each other and the children. The service had high aspirations for their staff team and continually looked at sustained ways to support them.

Additional staff were employed to ensure improvements were maintained and supported a consistent approach to children's care and routines. The setting had continual support from the leaders who were present and active in playrooms as they supported children and families. This highly visible approach ensured all staff were familiar to the children and promoted safe, secure attachments and positive relationships.

Clear and effective communication between staff and children promoted dignity and respect. There was excellent communication between staff throughout the day and they were very flexible and supportive of each other when routine tasks were being completed. This created a respectful atmosphere which ensured children were engaged in high quality experiences and were very well supported throughout the day.

Staff were extremely happy in their roles and spoke highly of their employment journey at Wellside, sharing achievements and further opportunities for training. The manager told us that staff were "recruited for attitude and trained for skills." This ensured the values of the service were adopted as the "right people" were appointed. Training was arranged to enable them to learn about the Wellside way. This was an innovative approach and worked very well for the service and ensured children's play and learning was valued and promoted. As a result, children experienced exceptionally high levels of nurture and care and were always supported.

The whole team recognised the importance of children and families being at the heart of the service. All staff were immensely proud of their setting and took pride in the nursery improvement work they had been involved in. A key strength of the service was the ongoing opportunities for staff to take lead roles. This empowered them to make positive changes. Staff were eager to share their work around development tasks. Sharing the impact of these tasks demonstrated effective and very high-quality outcomes for all children.

The manager had recently completed a mentally healthy workplace qualification. This ensured that staff wellbeing was at the forefront of the service. The management team had an excellent understanding that the health and wellbeing of staff was vital to help ensure children's needs were being fully met with the best possible care.

There was a clear process for mentoring and supporting all staff by using the skills and knowledge of the whole team. The induction process had been developed taking account of the Scottish Government published Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) National Induction Resource. The management team used the induction resource to reflect with the whole team. New staff shared that they felt very well supported and welcomed into the team. Regular check in's informally and formally ensured that staff could be reflective in their own learning journey. This ensured consistent approaches for children and enabled them to receive care and support of an outstandingly high quality. We were confident that these excellent practices were sustained and that excellent performance in this area would be maintained.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	6 - Excellent
1.1 Nurturing care and support	6 - Excellent
1.3 Play and learning	6 - Excellent

How good is our setting?	6 - Excellent
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	6 - Excellent

How good is our leadership?	6 - Excellent
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	6 - Excellent

How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent
4.3 Staff deployment	6 - Excellent

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