Dalmonach ELCC
Day Care of Children

First Avenue
Bonhill
Alexandria
G83 9AU

Telephone: 01389 758208

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 January 2020

Service provided by:
West Dunbartonshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003383

Service no:
CS2003014721

About the service

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

Dalmonach ELCC is located in the Bonhill area of Alexandria, West Dunbartonshire. The service is near to a bus route and local schools. The children have access to a large open plan playroom, two smaller playrooms and a large enclosed garden.

The service is registered to provide a day care of children service to 60 children from 3 years to children not yet attending Primary School.

The aims and objectives for this service include the following statements:
- To provide a caring environment and to work in close partnership with parents, community and outside agencies for the good of children. To promote equality and help every child to access the curriculum and achieve their potential.

The full aims and objectives statement can be accessed from the service.

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.

What people told us

During the inspection there were 52 children present on both days. We observed the children in the playrooms, the garden and children eating snacks and lunch. The children were engaged in their play and learning activities throughout the inspection.

Children were smiling, laughing and chatting with friends as they investigated loose parts and natural materials. Staff promoted positive behaviour well. This resulted in children being supported to negotiate and resolve conflict and encouraged children to build self esteem and empathy.

Children were keen to talk with us about their learning profiles. We saw pictures of the range of activities the children had enjoyed and heard about the "very big pumpkin" they had grown in the garden.

We spoke with a focus group of 20 parents/carers and 4 individual parents/carers. All parents/carers told us they were happy with the service and that management and staff were approachable and helpful. Some of the parents/carers told us the service was the "best in the area" and had a very good reputation locally.

Two parents spoke about how helpful the new style care plans had been. They felt staff really knew their child's like and dislikes before they started in the service. One parent spoke about how much she valued receiving the photograph of the keywoker and how her child had enjoyed sharing this with the extended family.

One parent commented their child was "looking forward to going to school."

Parents' comments from our care standard questionnaires included:

"I am very happy with the service my child and I receive. The staff always make time to speak to me about my child and involve me in their learning. I am kept up to date through various forms of communication including email and closed facebook page which allows me to access my child's learning and developments that are happening within the nursery, even when I am at work. The new look nursery creates a calm welcoming environment where I am happy for my child to spend the day."

One parent commented about how happy her child had been in the service and that they were leaving to start school "confident, happy and well balanced." This parent went on to say that she thought more space was needed. The manager confirmed the new extension will provide more space for the service.

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at the service's own improvement plan and discussed some quality assurance systems. These demonstrated some of the service's priorities for development and how they were monitoring of the quality of the provision within the service.

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

The nurturing staff team knew the children well and had a clear understanding of children's individual needs and how to support their emotional wellbeing. Children in need of additional support had detailed plans stating actions and responsibilities to help staff and other agencies effectively support the children.

Children's progress was included in floor books and profiles and showed some observations of children's learning and next steps. However, these were not always purposeful.
Management had already identified the need to support staff to record more purposeful observations and had started to introduce new style plans. Staff and parents confirmed the new plans had helped staff improve outcomes for new children. For example, detailed information included helped staff settle children in a more sensitive and nurturing way.

Lunch was served over three sittings to ensure children had space to sit comfortably. Staff sat with the children and respectfully encouraged the children to eat. This resulted in a relaxed and sociable lunchtime experience.

Staff gave parents information about what their children had eaten over the course of the day. This helped to keep parents informed.

Children ate well and were smiling and chatting during snack and lunchtimes. We heard about sensitive steps staff had taken to meet children's individual preferences and this had resulted in children eating more. Staff agreed to look at ways of supporting children to develop more independence. For example, by children helping to prepare lunch tables.

Staff were aware of the importance of transitions and had improved systems to support children moving from home to the service. The new transition programmes and links with Primary Schools were developing and taking into consideration children and families individual needs.

Staff were trained and knowledgeable about the service's procedures for protecting and safeguarding children. All staff had a clear understanding of children's allergies and the administration and storage of medication was well organised. Staff had taken part in training for administering particular medications. This supported them in their role and helped them take appropriate action to keep children safe. Staff agreed to keep a record of the review dates of children's medication.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

Staff provided a good range of experiences for children to engage in periods of sustained uninterrupted play, make independent choices and support children to begin to lead their own learning.

Children were confidently transporting play materials, including loose parts materials, between areas. This supported investigative and experimental play. For example, children were engaged in making "a monster castle, with lots of eyes and sharp teeth." Staff used effective questioning to support and extend children's play. This supported children's development in creativity and problem solving.

Staff were mindful of the extended day and had created comfortable areas for children to rest and relax.

Staff provided opportunities for children to develop their language and literacy skills through story time and the 'word aware' initiative. Children taking part in a Yoga session were developing a range of skills including, balance, relaxation, confidence and imagination.

Some children were in the garden with the sports coach, others were walking to the library and some children walked to a local waterfall. This gave children active play experiences and an understanding of community provision.

Staff encouraged children's early numeracy skills. For example, we heard children counting everyday objects and looking for numbers around the playrooms.

Systems were in place to manage health and safety. However, risk assessments did not include full information about how safety and security was managed. Management agreed to review and update the risk assessments.

The provider was fitting a new kitchen and extending the building, to support the expansion programme. There was dust in the playroom from the building work and this could have been hazardous. Children's outdoor suits were dirty and were hanging in the playroom. This could have been an infection control issue. When we brought this to the attention of management these matters were promptly addressed. Management confirmed the provider was planning further improvements in relation to the conservatory entrance and for more handwashing sinks in the playrooms.

Building work had resulted in limited access to the garden. The manager agreed to look at ways of safely accessing areas of the garden. We suggested involving children in risk assessments. This will give children some responsibility for assessing potential hazards.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Staff were welcoming and friendly towards children and visitors. They had good working relationships with each other, and this had create a warm and caring ethos in the service. Children approached staff freely and confidently. This demonstrated children were secure in their relationships with staff.

The staff team included qualified early learning and childcare practitioners, learning assistants, a modern apprentice and an HNC student. An early stages teacher worked with the children for part of the week. Staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) or the General Teaching Council and were aware of their responsibilities for continued registration. Management had plans in place to support staff to record their post registration training and learning for the SSSC.

Staff had completed a range of training and had met with management to discuss plans for future training. We discussed a range of good practice documents and management agreed to continue to share this information with staff. These documents, along with further training, will help support staff in their continued professional development.

Staff were enthusiastic about accessing further training and one member of staff spoke about her commitment to learning about Growth Mindset theory, to help children develop more resilience and confidence in their learning.

Staff told us they felt supported and empowered by management. For example, some staff had taken forward respectful initiatives to support new families settling in the service.

New staff confirmed they had a full induction through using the national induction resource and students were mentored by a qualified practitioner.

There had been significant changes within the staff team. However, we found relationships had developed well. For example, staff told us about benefits to their emotional wellbeing through 'The Cheers for Peers' initiative. This initiative provided opportunity for peer-to-peer recognition and appreciation.

Staff had started to take on leadership roles. For example, healthy eating, forest schools and eco work. Staff spoke enthusiastically about their future plans and we heard about the positive outcomes for families as a result of sharing the seasonal vegetables children had grown.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

Since the last inspection a new acting manager, depute manager and senior practitioner had been appointed. They worked well together and were respectful and motivated towards improving outcomes for the children and their families.

Parents and children had been involved in the development of the service. For example, parents had been consulted about the operating times and management had made changes to accommodate parents' wishes. Parents were involved in the 'forest schools' and 'word aware' initiatives. The reintroduction of the parents' committee and 'stay and play' sessions will provide further opportunities for parents to be involved in service development.

One parent commented:
"It's refreshing to see a school with an approach that keeps children safe but also allows them to still be children."

The acting manager spoke about staff being skilled individuals; she spoke about listening to staff views and considered how to use staff feedback to progress the development of the service. This had clearly impacted positively on the motivated staff team.

We heard about the benefits of team meetings and 'refection Fridays'. These meetings provided opportunities for staff to discuss the work of the service and reflect on their practice. Management and staff had started to use good practice documents to develop self evaluation processes and the service benefited from the regular help and guidance provided by local authority education support staff.

The service improvement plan set out areas of priority and the acting manager discussed the need to revise the improvement plan to take account of the proposed expansion of the service.

Management had carried out some monitoring observations. We discussed the benefits of keeping detailed records of how they were taking forward issues identified through monitoring and the progress made to outcomes for children.

Staff recorded accidents and incidents and took appropriate action to help ensure children's wellbeing and inform parents. Regular audits were carried out as part of quality assurance processes and this information highlighted that staff had taken action to reduce the repetition of accidents.

Management agreed to display the most up-to-date complaints procedure. This will ensure parents have accurate information.

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

Recommendation 1

The management team should continue with plans to support staff to make improvements to recording and reporting systems for children's plans. The management team should put systems in place to make sure the personal plans include children's personal preferences and meaningful observations linked to children's next steps in development and learning. Staff should ensure they also record the progress of particular targets set to promote positive outcomes for children with additional support needs.

All of this information should be discussed with parents as part of the six months review or be updated when needed. This will result in clear and detailed information being in place for each child in order for staff to support individual needs and promote positive outcomes. This will also help to make sure parents are fully included in identifying their child's on-going needs and help them keep track of how their child is developing and learning in the service.

This ensures care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: '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.' (HSCS 1.15)

This recommendation was made on 9 October 2018.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Staff had taken action and the plans for children with additional support needs were now in place. New style personal plans were being introduced and we asked staff to improve observations to ensure they were purposeful and had clearer next steps.

Recommendation 2

Staff should continue to review the learning outcomes for children, both inside and outside, to ensure they provide a dynamic, fun, stimulating and enabling environment. Children should be given the time and space to develop their ideas, flourish and be creative.

This ensures the quality of the environment is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:
- 'As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling.' (HSCS 1.30)
- 'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials.' (HSCS 1.31) and
- 'As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment.'
(HSCS 1.32).

This recommendation was made on 9 October 2018.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Staff had taken steps to improve the indoor and outdoor learning environment. We noticed children were more engaged in their play. Staff had introduced loose parts play and children used the materials well. Staff supported children to freely choose activities, develop their ideas and complete tasks they were engaged in.

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	
12 Sep 2018	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	3 - Adequate 4 - Good Not assessed Not assessed
20 Aug 2015	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
6 Sep 2012	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 4 - Good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
2 Dec 2009	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good 4 - Good 5 - Very good

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Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

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