Stepping Stones Nursery School
Day Care of Children

7 Saline Street
Airdrie
ML6 9BE

Telephone: 01236 779292

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 July 2019

Service provided by:
Stepping Stones Nursery School (Airdrie) Limited

Service provider number:
SP2010010818

Service no:
CS2010238277

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 was previously registered with the Care Commission and transferred its registration to the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service. We want to ensure they have the best start in life, are ready to succeed and live longer, healthier lives.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC). Set up by Scottish Government, GIRFEC is a national approach to working in a consistent way with all children and young people. It is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. The approach helps services focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people - and what they can do to improve. Getting it right for every child is being woven into all policy, practice, strategy and legislation that affect children, young people and their families.

There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting it Right for Every Child. They are: safe; healthy; achieving; nurtured; active; respected; responsible; and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI indicators. We use these indicators at inspection, to assess how services are making a positive difference for children.

Stepping Stones Nursery School is located in a detached building within its own grounds in the Coatdyke area of Airdrie, and comprises of three playrooms. Playrooms for younger children are located on the ground floor, while the playroom for children aged two and over is located on the upper floor. Each playroom has its own toilets and changing area. There are well resourced outdoor play areas for all children. A secure entry system is in place, and there is ramp access to the building.

An office is available for private discussions with parents/carers or visiting agencies.

The nursery is managed by the two owners and the depute manager supports the work of the nursery and leads on developments.

The service is registered to provide early learning and childcare to a maximum of 58 children at any one time under the age of 16 as follows:

Explorers: 11 children aged from 6 months to under 2 years;
Adventurers: 15 children aged 2 years to under 3 years; OR 3 children aged under 2 years and 10 children aged from 2 years to under 3 years; OR 6 children under 2 years and 5 children aged from 2 years to under 3 years;
Discoverers: 32 children aged from 2 years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service operates during term time and holidays, between the hours of 7.30am and 6.00pm.

The service is in partnership with North Lanarkshire Council to provide early learning and childcare for children aged from two years.

The service aims to 'provide high quality childcare and learning in a caring, safe and stimulating environment.

The service's full aims and objectives are available to parents/carers and visitors.

This report was written following an unannounced inspection carried out by one inspector over the course of two days. We visited on Monday 29 July 2019 and returned on Tuesday 30 July 2019 to conclude the inspection and provide feedback to the managers and depute manager.

During our visit we spoke with children, parents/carers, staff and management team.

We asked the service to distribute 20 care standards questionnaires to parents/carers on our behalf. Five were completed and returned to us prior to the inspection taking place.
We also received three completed questionnaires from staff. Their feedback demonstrated that they felt well supported in their work. This was confirmed through discussions during our visit.

We assessed the quality of care and support and staffing at this inspection.

What people told us

Children's views:

We found children to be happy, content and settled throughout the nursery. While many were too young to share their views, we could see they were confident in the setting, were familiar with routines and had developed positive relationships with staff and peers. Older children were happy to chat to us about what they enjoyed doing at nursery. Playing outdoors was a particular favourite. They spoke enthusiastically about activities and snacktime.

The children's comments included:

'I'm making presents for Santa, I'm going to send them to his house'.

'I like to play in the garden with my friends'.

'I'm building a tall tower. Look at it, it's huge. I need another piece to make it bigger'.

'I have a big apple, it's delicious'.

'I like to pretend I'm buying things from the shops, it's good fun'.

Parent/carer's views:

We spoke with three parents/carers during our visit. They spoke positively about their child's nursery experience and told us there were lots of opportunities for outdoor play and that their child had made special friends in nursery. They told us staff were caring, friendly and approachable and knew the children well. They also shared some examples of the personal support they had received from staff and management.

Parents/carers who completed the care standards questionnaires generally strongly agreed/agreed with all statements. These related to the quality of care and support, environment, staffing and management and leadership. One parent/carer disagreed that the service makes good use of community resources and others indicated they 'did not know'. We discussed this with the management team, who agreed this was an area they planned to further develop.

Their comments included:

'The staff are great with the children. They cover fun topics to encourage the children to learn about new things for example, animals, countries etc'.

'I personally feel the staff have helped my child to be outgoing and comfortable to voice his opinions and have helped him learn in a fun environment'.

'Staff have worked so professionally with me and my child and also provided me with the confidence to help my child. Great staff and nursery'.

'Fantastic learning environment for my child. Her speech has developed so much, as has her confidence. All staff are warm and friendly and we are informed updates daily and have good progress reports'.

'All staff are friendly and they know the names of all the children. My child has a good relationship with staff and other children'.

Self assessment

We did not request a self-assessment from the service prior to this inspection. We discussed the service's improvement plan, progress from the last inspection and future plans for improvement with the management team.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	not assessed
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

What the service does well

Across the setting children were happy, content and enjoyed spending time at their nursery. Many children had attended the service since they were very young and had progressed through each room. Children were confident and had developed very positive relationships with staff and other children. While each child had a key worker who was responsible for their care and wellbeing, most staff had worked in the nursery for a number of years and therefore knew children and their families very well. We observed young children settling into nursery and found this was carried out sensitively and taken at each child's own pace. Staff told us they observed young children very closely in these early days, to establish if they form a bond with a particular member of staff, which informs who their key worker will be. Having access to continuous, caring relationships helps children to settle and feel safe and secure. We observed positive, nurturing interactions from staff who were attuned to children's needs and feelings. Children experienced warmth and kindness and received reassurance and affection.

When children played freely we found they were engaged in their chosen activities. During these times, we observed them directing their own play, being creative and having fun. As a result, they were motivated to learn and were developing key skills. Children had access to a good range of toys and resources to support their play.

Staff had established positive relationships with parents/carers. We observed them sharing and gathering information with parents/carers at drop off and pick up times, which enabled them to respond to children's changing needs. This promotes good continuity of care between home and the nursery setting. Regular meetings between staff and parents/carers provided opportunities to discuss children's needs, progress and next steps. Staff and management demonstrated a strong commitment to involving parents/carers in all aspects of nursery life.

Staff worked hard to ensure children had a positive nursery experience. All were qualified and registered with the appropriate professional body. We found new staff had been recruited safely. Staff felt supported in their work and spoke positively about inductions, personal support, training and appraisals. Staff told us they were benefiting from the introduction of mentoring meetings and working closely with management in the playrooms. This provided management with opportunities to provide support, model good practice and monitor children's experiences.

Children were safe and protected. Staff were aware of the signs that could indicate children may be at harm. They had recently participated in child protection training and demonstrated an awareness of procedures.

Staff told us they felt consulted on important matters and had opportunities to discuss their work and individual children. They had engaged in a variety of relevant learning and development opportunities to develop and strengthen their skills and knowledge.

What the service could do better

We found there was scope for children's needs to be supported more effectively (see recommendation 1)

For example:

- While younger children benefited from flexible routines that were responsive to their needs and interests, the children in the Discovery Zone experienced more structured routines. At times, we observed children becoming disengaged and distracted when being asked to sit for extended periods e.g. lunchtime and extensive adult led activities.

- There was scope for outdoor play opportunities to be more responsive to the needs and interests of the children. While we acknowledged the layout of the building required a planned approach, we found at times, the timetabling of daily morning and afternoon outdoor play restricted children's choice.

- Children's learning journeys and personal plans provided some meaningful information about their progress and achievements. We discussed how these should be more individualised and clearly detail how staff plan to support children's needs and next steps in their development. We also suggested plans could more clearly demonstrate how children are involved.

- We found there were opportunities where children's independence could have been more fully promoted in the setting.

We also agreed the following areas for improvement with the management team:

- Exploring opportunities to enable children to experience the local and wider community

- Continue to ensure children have access to a wide range of resources, including open ended and natural resources

- Continue to support staff to develop skills and knowledge needed to support children's learning and wellbeing

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The manager and staff should ensure each children's needs are being supported effectively.

This is to ensure, that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social care Standards which state;

'My personal 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)
'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me'. (HSCS 1.19)
'As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment'. (HSCS1.32)
'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity'. (HSCS 2.27)

Special consideration should be given to:

- Activities and routines
- Children's personal plans
- Maximising opportunities to promote children's independence
- Explore ways to enable children to express their views and influence the nursery programme.

Complaints

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

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.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
11 May 2017	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed Not assessed 5 - Very good
5 May 2015	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
22 Apr 2013	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
27 May 2011	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing	5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Management and leadership	4 - Good

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