Riverside Cottage Nursery
Day Care of Children

Riverside Cottage
9 Riverside Lea
Blackburn
Bathgate
EH47 7EL

Telephone: 01506 650 583

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
27 October 2022

Service provided by:
David Addison

Service provider number:
SP2011011751

Service no:
CS2011305706

About the service

Riverside Cottage Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 35 children at any one time aged from two years to 12 years.

The Nursery, which is situated on the outskirts of a town in West Lothian, includes a large playroom, a covered outdoor area, kitchen and toilet. The extensive outdoor areas used by children include woodland, an allotment, and open green space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 19 October 2022 between the hours of 13:30 and 16:45, and Thursday 20 October 2022 between the hours of 07:30 and 14:30. 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 since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with 15 people using the service and four members of their family;
- Spoke with eight staff and management;
- Observed practice and daily life;
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- High quality extensive outdoor natural environment.
- Range of resources and experiences available to children.
- Dedicated and professional staff team.
- Commitment to empowering and supporting children.
- High level of parent satisfaction with the service.
- Ensure quality assurance systems are kept up to date.

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?	4 - 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 found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Throughout the nursery, and without exception, we saw that children were happy and settled in the care of staff who provided consistent nurturing care and support. Staff respected children's ability to make decisions on where and how they played and encouraged them to do so. Children moved around freely without constraints, they felt safe because staff were there to help and assist, as necessary.

Conversations between staff and children demonstrated high quality interaction which focused on giving children the skills they needed to become confident, independent learners. Skilled staff intervened in children's play and activities only when invited, or when they could see that their intervention would add value to the child's experience.

When a group of children elected to go on a familiar walk, staff discussed the walk with them and asked them if they could recall how they could keep safe and take care of one another. Children talked confidently about how they would stay safe when they were near the river, what they would do if they came across an animal on the path, or when they might need adult help. Staff's enabling approach gave children ownership of their walk which built confidence and self esteem.

Routines were in place to empower children and not to restrain them. The free flowing lunch time allowed children to choose when they wanted to eat. This meant their play was not interrupted unnecessarily and they were able to immerse themselves fully in their chosen activity. Staff were aware that lunchtimes were social occasions, they sat with children supporting conversation and social skills. Meals were nutritious and looked appetising. Children were encouraged to serve their own food and drinks which supported independence and confidence.

Staff had created calm and restful spaces for children who wanted to sleep or rest. They were able to chose to sleep in a cot, on individual sleeping mats or in hammocks in the woodland area. Hammocks were a popular choice. In order to support this in all weathers, a covered outdoor area could also be used. A child told us, "I love the hammock, it's like floating in the sky." This enabled children to feel safe, nurtured, and supported their wellbeing.

Parents were positive about the relationships they had with staff and the feedback they received about their children's progress. We saw evidence that children's care plans had been shared with parents and were used to support joint working. This showed respect and valued parents input. A parent told us, "No pressure is put on the child, though I'm aware that they are always planning and helping the children move forward." Another parent said, "Every day my children are there time is dedicated to telling us how they are getting on."

1.3 Play and Learning

There was a purposeful buzz around the nursery which was set in extensive grounds with open green spaces, woodland and an allotment. Staff monitored the area and used walkie talkies to communicate with one another so they knew where the children were. This allowed children complete freedom to choose where they wanted to play, further evidencing the services ethos of giving children real choice in order to support independence and confidence.

Outdoor play focused on abundant natural materials and loose parts. Children enjoyed vigorous physical play as they ran, jumped and climbed. This helped promote wellbeing and confidence in their abilities. Children were curious about their environment and many asked staff questions about the world around them. Staff engaged enthusiastically in these conversations, their thoughtful interventions helped children think for themselves and problem solve. Parents comments included "I love hearing about how our child interacts with nature, finding frogs, birds nests, being on the allotment, playing in the river. The staff are wonderful and our child loves them."

A polytunnel used mainly as an arts and crafts area, was well equipped and used frequently throughout the day as children made models and engaged in imaginative play with small world toys. All of the materials were laid out or stored where children could reach them without adult support. This supported the nursery ethos of empowering children by giving them meaningful choice in how they spent their time in nursery.

Indoor space was used well. Children could choose from a range of activities depending on their interests. They included a writing area, large block play area, a home corner, loose parts play puzzles and a comfortable book area. Staff were aware of the rich learning experiences these areas offered children, and we talked about some of the ways they could ensure the areas evolved in order to ensure they maintained children's interest.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The provider, manager and staff had worked on their shared vision of an environment which empowered children and allowed them to experience being in a natural environment for as much of their day as they chose, regardless of weather or time of year.

The outdoor environment was of a very high quality. Children enjoyed freedom to explore all of the outdoor spaces, choose activities and resources that challenged them physically and mentally. We saw children working together to build structures from loose parts and natural materials, sharing ideas and solving problems.

Children had complete freedom to chose whether they wanted to play inside or outdoors. Although the weather during the inspection was cool and sometimes wet, the abundance and quality of experiences in the outdoor area meant that most children chose to play there most of the time. Staff made sure children had access to warmth and rest if they wanted this, either in the nursery or the allotment where a managed fire had been set up by staff who had been trained in using fire in nursery settings.

The supervised outdoor fire was popular with children who enjoyed 'fire porridge' cooked over the fire while they sat with friends. Many children stayed round the fire long after the porridge was finished enjoying companionship and sharing stories. Children were eager to tell us of the do's and don'ts for being safe near fire. This reinforced their own knowledge and helped keep them safe.

The indoor environment, with its enclosed wood burning stove, fairy lights, comfortable seating and large table, created a welcoming environment. Children used the area well as they chatted to their friends, read books and played with puzzles and other games. Active and imaginative play experiences included the home area and the large block play space. Arts and crafts activities were available in the polytunnel. The area was well resourced and children were free to experiment and be creative with the varied resources which they could access for themselves.

We received many positive comments from parents praising the environment and the freedom their children had, and the benefits of this on their children's wellbeing.

Infection control was well managed. This included ensuring that children washed their hands at key points in the day. This regular routine helped embed good habits for life, and was used as an opportunity to remind children how washing away germs could help them to stay healthy.

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children, and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

3.1 How good is our leadership?

The manager had a vision for the ongoing development of the service which focused on meeting children's needs in a high quality nurturing environment. In order to do this, the manager was committed to the continuous development of the staff team and communication with parents. Both staff and parents told us the manager was approachable and supportive.

Because she spent time in the nursery, the manager was well known to children and parents. She was able to observe and get to know staff's skills, children's needs, and areas for development in the service. Staff were working with the local authority on planning which had been identified as an area for improvement, and progress was being made in this area.

Staff took part in regular support and supervision sessions with the manager. These meetings were recorded, staff identified areas they wanted to discuss, and any training needs or interests they wanted to pursue. However, there was no record of the manager's feedback to staff. In order to be effective, and to promote accountability, feedback from supervision should be recorded. The manager agreed to do this.

Staff were encouraged to take part in training to support their professional development. This is evidenced in the training opportunities identified in Quality Indicator 4.3.

We had no concerns over the performance of staff or their understanding of their responsibility to care for children in line with the services expectations. We spoke to a recently recruited member of staff who confirmed that they had received an induction which they felt prepared them for their role in the service. The manager was responsible for the induction of new members of staff. She was able to describe how she did this, and the areas she focused on in order to make sure that staff had the knowledge they needed to work and care for children safely. However, there was no formal record of staff induction having taken place. The manager now needs to compile a list of the areas to be included in staff induction. These should include all areas that have the potential to impact on children's wellbeing and safety, and should be signed and dated by the manager and the staff member as they are completed. This should be kept with the employees records. This is now an area for improvement. (See area for improvement 1).

A daily record was maintained for children who slept while in the nursery. The record showed the time they went down and the time they got up. A member of staff stayed with sleeping children and checked them from time to time, however, there was no record of this. Checks on sleeping children should be recorded as evidence, we made this an area for improvement. (See area for improvement 2).

Areas for improvement

1. New members of staff should be given a full induction into the service. This should include all areas of health and safety necessary to ensure the wellbeing of children, and should prepare staff for their role in the service. The content of the induction programme should be recorded formally, and as training is completed, each area should be signed and dated by the manager and staff member as evidence that this has taken place.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which states: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23), and 'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources.' (HSCS 4.27).

2. In order to evidence the checks staff made on children while they slept, a formal record of the timing of these checks should be included in the daily sleep records.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which states: 'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources.' (HSCS 4.27).

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

4.3 Staff deployment

Staff were employed in sufficient numbers to meet children's needs. They were qualified or in training, and where appropriate, registered with the Scottish Social Services Council.

The dedicated staff team shared a joint vision for the ongoing development of the service which put supporting and empowering children at its heart. Staff were aware of one another's strengths. This, together with their professional knowledge of children's needs and interests, helped ensure they were deployed effectively. This helped children to thrive and make the most of the activities and experiences available to them.

Staff had taken part in a wide range of training opportunities which helped them reflect on, and continuously develop their practice. They included planning, additional support needs, reflective practice, literacy, numeracy, and many more.

Some staff took part in local authority Additional Support Network meetings, where they benefited from professional discussion and the input of other professionals including speech and language therapists, and educational psychologists. The knowledge gained at these meetings was used to deploy staff effectively ensuring children got the support they needed to thrive in the nursery.

Regular team meetings allowed staff to share their observations of children's interests and ideas and used them in future planning. The team had a shared understanding of how they worked with and responded to children based on dignity and respect. These consistent strategies meant that children received consistent care and support. This helped them to feel safe, secure, and ready to make the most of the abundant opportunities available to them.

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?	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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànain eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.