Tweedbank Early Learners SCIO
Day Care of Children

Tweedbank Community Centre
Essenside Drive
Tweedbank
Galashiels
TD1 3RT

Telephone: 01896 756167

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 March 2020

Service provided by:
Tweedbank Early Learners a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Service provider number:
SP2018013056

Service no:
CS2018363805

HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

About the service

Tweedbank Early Learners is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 33 children aged from two years to those not yet attending primary school. Of those no more than 12 are aged two years to under three years.

The setting has two designated playrooms within Tweedbank Community centre as well as a spacious cloakroom area and access to the larger hall. Direct access from the playrooms to the garden allows for children to move freely to the area they wished to play in.

The setting aims to:

-'provide a happy, safe and stimulating environment where children, parents, carers and visitors feel welcomed and valued as members of our community
- support the holistic learning and development of our children. We aim to encourage and inspire our children to grow in self-confidence, self-esteem and independence
- encourage problem-solving skills, imagination, creativity, a love of the outdoors and to foster a love of lifelong learning and discovery through providing opportunities for child-led imaginative free play
- encourage and enable all children to develop an understanding of their own and others feelings, and an awareness of other cultures and beliefs
- provide a curriculum which is broad and balanced and which offers our children continuity, progression and choice: To reflect on our practice in order to improve the range and quality of experiences for all children, the impact of these experiences, and the outcomes which they achieve
- support our dedicated, professional and enthusiastic staff team, and provide opportunities for the on-going professional development needed to deliver high quality early learning & childcare for our children'.

What people told us

The children were engrossed in their play and appeared very much 'at home' in the setting. The older children were happy to show us around 'their nursery', share their learning journals with us and involve us in and tell us about their play, for example:

'We like playing because there are lots of toys'.
'I like listening to music with the headphones'.
'We are having breadsticks and carrots for snack'.

Of the fourteen questionnaires sent to the service to distribute to families, eleven were returned to us completed. During our visits, we also spoke to parents about their experience of the setting. From both sources it was clear that parents held staff in high regard describing them as 'very caring and nurturing', 'welcoming', 'exceptional at fostering a nurturing, caring environment that puts their children and families at the centre of all planning and activities','amazing', 'lovely and helpful' and 'second to none'.

They were also appreciative of the experiences and overall environment on offer to their child, telling us 'the children are outside in the fresh air most days and seem happy and content', 'it is a wonderful, calm setting which looks magical to the children due to the décor and use of props and themes', 'staff have successfully created a very loving, nurturing home like environment for the children', 'particularly like the use of natural resources and the calm setting they have created' and 'we love how our child has the opportunity to play with and experience a huge range of resources which are all natural and/or real life materials'.

Additional representative comments included:

- 'I feel my child's time spent here has hugely built her confidence and social skills. We love it'!
- 'Its really welcoming to parents and carers. They have stay and play, regular fundraisers and they want to get children involved in their community'.
- 'I feel privileged to be able to send my children to Early Learners'.
- 'Our child has learned so much already but, most importantly, for her confidence, self-esteem and her mind-set has grown enormously'.
-'Staff go above and beyond to provide a unique and valuable learning environment'.

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to submit a self-assessment to inform this inspection. The service had a development plan which we viewed and considered during the inspection.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

With an emphasis on nurture and attachment, staff showed warmth, kindness and compassion which supported children to feel loved and valued. Staff spoke fondly and knowledgeably about children and it was clear secure relationships had been formed which would contribute to children feeling nurtured and safe. We observed responsive interactions where staff used sensitive questioning to promote children's creativity, extend their thinking and widen their skills.

Well planned, respectful, individualised introductions to the settling gave children, their family and staff time to build trusting relationships. Parents told us they were appreciative of the setting in process as it offered lots of reassurance to them and their child. Likewise transitions within and when leaving the setting were arranged well to support children's sense of security. At these times staff gathered and shared all relevant information about children to enable their needs to be met.

Each child had a personal plan outlining their needs and preferences. Staff used this information to ensure they responded to individual needs in a consistent way between home and the setting. Children led their own learning as most staff used observations of children's interests to plan and provide experiences. The manager agreed with us when we highlighted that on occasion, written observations did not always capture the significant learning and could be improved upon to ensure they are informative, with a clear meaning and purpose.

Staff understood the importance of early intervention and giving children the best start in life. From speaking to staff and reading records we saw staff were able to identify needs and possible vulnerabilities. As a result, we saw evidence of strong partnerships with parents and other agencies. This ensured each child was respectfully seen as an individual and received the right support at the right time. Whilst relevant information was evident and children's needs were being met, we discussed that perhaps there was a more concise way to record significant changes and demonstrate the important work that went into meeting needs.

Likewise, although all information was there, medication records would benefit from a specific format to record how to meet these needs and follow instructions on administering medication. The manager was appreciative of this advice and keen to take it on board as it would make for a more robust recording procedure.

It was apparent that children were familiar with the routine of the day which helped them feel secure. We observed many instances when children approached staff to make their feelings known or for a cuddle and a chat, again demonstrating a feeling of security. Staff were sensitive to those children who were less confident and provided them with the appropriate nurture and gentle encouragement. Staff actively sought children's views and feelings in a variety of non intrusive ways which contributed to children having a real sense of belonging in the setting.

Snack and mealtimes were pleasant, sociable times for children. Staff sat and ate with the children, providing role modelling whilst laughing and chatting about their day. The 'family feel' in the setting allowed for children to be involved in the preparation of the healthy, well balanced food, setting of tables and self serving. Thus providing ample opportunities for children to increase their independence, social skills and contribute positively to their overall well being. Systems were in place to ensure children were kept safe and healthy should they have specific dietary requirements, allergies and preferences.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

Staff had created a high quality learning environment with a focus on children's right to play. As a result, we saw motivated children having fun and leading their own play using a wide range of natural, open-ended and real life resources. Placing high importance on such materials meant that children were engrossed in play materials that could be used in multiple ways that supported problem solving and offered a sense of wonder.

Spaces had been thoughtfully arranged to allow children to feel 'at home' in the warm and nurturing environment. Cosy places offered children the freedom to rest and sleep should they wish to do so. The good use of lighting, compensated for the lack of natural light and created a calm and inviting setting for children.

Investment in warm outdoor clothing and footwear meant that all children could explore the natural environment and experience a sense of freedom in all weather. This also helped towards children to develop an understanding of real life and to benefit their well-being. The free access to large open spaces afforded children to move freely and practice skills such as running. Staff encouraged children in their endeavours and knew when to hold back or step in to support children to take positive risks and develop skills for life. The use of open ended, real life resources continued outside offering variety, flexibility and interest and stimulate children's natural curiosity. Staff spoke of further plans they had in mind for the garden which would continue to enhance outcomes for children. We agreed that this would further enhance the already very good play experience for children in the outdoors.

Staff were continuously developing the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) area with interactive props and real life resources. This would continue to contribute to children being successful learners and enable them to see the connections in real life contexts.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Staff were friendly and welcoming to children which contributed to them feeling safe and valued. Staff showed commitment to doing their best for the children who they saw as unique individuals with an important place within the setting. Good team work and sharing of information ensured staff could effectively plan children's care and support. Observations of children's play featured in staff meetings and in conversations during the day which resulted in a responsive and flexible approach to providing what children needed to flourish and develop.

Staff practice highlighted very good understanding of child development, theory and good practice documents. It was clear that best practice, national and local policy and the Health and Social Care Standards were embedded into practice. Staff were able to access a wide range of training opportunities and took advantage of these. Staff applied their training, knowledge and understanding which was having a positive impact on children's well-being and overall learning and development.

Staff told us the appraisals system provided opportunity for reflection, clarity of roles and responsibility and making future plans. Appraisals identified staff training needs which would impact positively on outcomes for children, for example planned Forest school training for some staff.

With recognition that parents knew their child best, staff placed importance on developing positive relationships, engaging them in their child's learning and providing opportunities to be involved in the life of the setting. This

approach had meant that parents had helped shape the setting's aims and values, participated in monthly community walks, Friday café, stay and play and parent consultations. They were also heavily involved in fund raising and had been consulted on policy change. We highlighted that it would be beneficial for staff to conduct parent consultations to ensure a shared approach to conversing with parents about their child's needs.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The manager's welcoming and visible presence made her accessible to all, giving confidence in the care provided. The manager and team had a clear vision and determined to get it right for all children and as a result, children received high quality interactions and experiences. Staff had areas of responsibility, however, the manager recognised the need for further delegation amongst the staff team thus strengthening teamwork, empowerment and culture of improvement.

Staff shared their good practice and knowledge with other early learning and childcare professionals in the local authority. The setting had recently hosted an open evening for staff of other nurseries to share the setting's environment and play experiences within in it and presentations on techniques and strategies to enable children's learning. We were told about the pride this brought about in the staff team thus increasing confidence through an opportunity to share and discuss best practice with other professionals.

The manager had a vision for the service which was shared with staff and held children at the centre. Best practice documents were used to prompt change in provision whilst informal observations supported staff to implement the change. This meant that the quality of care children received was consistently high.

The setting safer recruitment policy was in line with best practice, however we found there were gaps in some of the recruitment processes that were carried out by the Trustees. We have asked that those who carry out recruitment familiarise themselves with current safer recruitment guidance (Safer Recruitment through better recruitment, Scottish Government 2016). We also discussed with the manager that she needs to have clear oversight of this process to provide confidence that people have been appropriately and safely recruited.

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

There are no outstanding recommendations.

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

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.

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