Woodlands Early Learning and Childcare Centre
Day Care of Children

Woodlands E L C Centre
Callendar Boulevard
Callendar Business Park, Callendar Road
FALKIRK
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Telephone: 01324 501310

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
18 April 2023

Service provided by:
Falkirk Council

Service provider number:
SP2004006884

Service no:
CS2021000330

About the service

Woodlands Early Learning and Childcare Centre is a daycare of children service situated in the Falkirk area. It is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 45 children aged two years to not yet attending primary school, at any one time. Of whom no more than five are aged two years to under three years.

Children have access to an open plan indoor play area with direct access to toileting and nappy changing facilities. An enclosed garden offers children free flow access to outdoor space throughout the day. The service makes very good use of the local community. Planned visits to nearby Callendar Park provide children with daily opportunities to spend extended periods of time exploring, playing and learning outdoors, in nature.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 18 April 2023 between 08:45 and 17:30. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the service opened.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with several children in the service
- spoke with one family on the day of inspection and reviewed emails from ten families.
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and interactions with children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced kind, nurturing approaches to their care.
- Planning approaches were child centred and responsive to children's interests.
- Children benefitted from relaxed, unhurried mealtimes which supported their independence.
- Staff recognised the positive impact being outdoors had on children's overall wellbeing.
- The service made very good use of the rich, natural environment offered within the local community.
- The motivated staff team were committed to continuous improvement within the service.

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?	5 - Very 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 these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Children were nurtured and cared for by a responsive staff team who knew each of them very well. Care routines were individual to children's needs and were delivered with kindness and compassion. It was evident that positive relationships between staff, children and their families had been established. Parents described staff as "welcoming and nurturing." One parent said "every day someone greets us like we are part of a family." As a result children felt loved and secure as their overall wellbeing was supported and their needs were being met.

Nutritious snacks and lunches were provided by the service. Children's preferences were considered when planning the snack menu. They were offered opportunities to accompany staff to shop for snack provisions. This provided children with real life learning opportunities as they selected and paid for the shopping.

We observed lunchtimes within the setting to be relaxed, unhurried and calm. Children could choose when they ate, which allowed them to enjoy uninterrupted play. Staff supported them to develop their independence skills as children selected their own food, poured their drinks and washed their dishes. A member of staff sat with the small groups and chatted as they ate. This ensured children were safe and provided a positive, caring social experience where children felt valued.

At the time of inspection children's personal plans were in the process of being reviewed and redesigned. The management team had reflected on the importance of ensuring children and families views were meaningfully represented within plans. We were shown examples of these and could see that they were being developed for all children and took account of the wellbeing indicators. Personal plans are to be stored securely within the playroom where they will be accessible for staff and children. This will ensure effective information sharing and further support consistency and continuity of care for all children.

Quality indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children were busy and engaged in leading their play and learning throughout our visit. They benefitted from a skilled staff team who were responsive and planned high quality play experiences, which promoted children's choice based on their interests. Staff allowed children to take their time and wallow in experiences. This was particularly evident during their visit to the woods, as children explored nature. Effective use of questioning extended children's thinking, encouraged language development and supported children to consolidate their learning through play. As a result children were progressing well and were happy and confident.

Planning for children's play and learning was child centred and responsive to their interests. Carefully considered observations of children's learning, and their progress, were recorded and shared with families through digital journals. Staff used the observations to plan opportunities to extend children's learning. This ensured play experiences provided met children's needs and engaged their imagination and learning, which resulted in children having fun and achieving their potential. Families shared with us that they liked

the online journals and felt part of their child's life at nursery. One parent told us, "the learning journal app is amazing, it lets us see what our son gets up to and to be able to comment and post our own pictures and activities outside of nursery." Another family shared their thoughts, "we love the online journals where our sons' 'key person' shares updates on his play and learning weekly which paints a great picture about what he is learning."

Children's opportunities for play and learning were greatly enhanced through use of the wider community. Daily outdoor experiences included extended periods of time spent in the local woodland area. Children had time to play, explore and enjoy nature. They learned about sustainability and the importance of looking after the environment. Twice weekly visits to local allotments promoted a deeper understanding of this, as the service had committed to developing plots for planting and growing. These opportunities supported children to feel included in their local and wider community.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

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

Quality Indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment where they could play and learn. The well maintained, open plan playroom was furnished to a high standard with lots of natural light and ventilation. Restful, quiet areas had been considered to offer children space to rest and relax during the day. Children were confident moving around the spaces available, both indoors and in the enclosed outdoor spaces. One child told us, "I like nursery, I like it a lot." Another said, "I like going outside, we can go outside when we want." This supported children to lead their own play and have fun with their friends.

Staff had a very good understanding of the positive impact that outdoor play had on children's overall wellbeing. Children benefitted from free flow access to the nursery garden throughout their day. The secure outdoor area had been thoughtfully developed to offer choice and challenge, appropriate to children's stage of development. The service also made very good use of the rich, natural environment offered within the local community. This provided children with many opportunities to explore and further develop their gross motor skills. Outdoor experiences meant children were learning about the benefits of an active lifestyle that promoted their health and wellbeing.

Risk assessments ensured that children's safety was promoted as potential risks had been minimised, without compromising activities. Children were meaningfully involved in completing risk assessments. For example, we witnessed children explaining the risks and safety measures as they set up camp in the woods. They had worked with staff to produce a pictorial risk assessment and spoke confidently and knowledgably as they explained this to their friends. One family told us how their child had been using these skills at home. They said, "She is able to share her risk assessing skills with us as a family as we take on our own adventures outdoors." As a result children were supported to enjoy challenging, fun play experiences as they developed an awareness of risky play.

Staff had a good understanding of children's individual dietary requirements and allergies which resulted in safe food practices. Infection prevention and control routines were embedded and further supported a safe environment. The playroom was clean and well-ventilated throughout the day. Children were encouraged to wash their hands at key times and regular cleaning procedures meant that the spread of infection was kept to a minimum.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

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

Quality indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvements are led well

Strong and encouraging leadership supported staff to develop confidence and knowledge to take on lead roles. For example, some staff had developed and were involved in leading a robust training programme. The aim of which was to increase rich outdoor learning experiences for staff and children from across the Falkirk area. The enthusiastic staff team felt valued and were committed to delivering high quality experiences for children and families.

The shared vision, aim and values of the service were evident in the kind and nurturing interactions we witnessed throughout our visit. The positive ethos meant staff were proactive in taking shared responsibility for change. As a result children benefitted from a staff team who were motivated and responsive to meeting their needs.

The service had created an improvement plan based on priorities identified by the management and staff team. Effective policies, procedures and quality assurance processes were in place, and also supported the development of the service. To further promote partnership working we discussed ways to include the views of children and families in future improvement planning. This would ensure they were meaningfully involved in the development of the service and the culture of continuous improvement further promoted.

Staff recognised the important part they each played in meeting the needs of children and families. Regular staff meetings supported staff to have high aspirations for the service. They also provided opportunities for staff to reflect together and share information to support children's learning and overall wellbeing. Consideration had been given to the timing of meetings and minutes were recorded to ensure all staff were involved. This ensured a clear and consistent approach was effectively communicated.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

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

Quality indicator 4.3 - Staff deployment

Staff knew children well and secure relationships between them were evident in the kind and compassionate interactions we observed. Parents told us that staff were supportive, approachable, professional and loving. One parent shared with us, "the one thing that really stands out, above everything else, is the staff interactions with children and how they immerse themselves in children's play." This meant that children felt safe, secure and happy in a service where a caring staff team nurtured and supported them.

Effective use was made of staff experience, knowledge and skills to ensure children's experiences across their day were positive. Staff communicated very well with each other and worked together to keep children safe and engaged in quality experiences throughout the day. This meant that key tasks and responsibilities could be carried out whilst ensuring continued positive outcomes for children.

Staffing levels within the service offered opportunities for staff to support smaller groups of children in their

extended outdoor sessions at the woods. This meant that children were very well supported to explore and investigate the world around them, at their own pace.

The management team were creative and ambitious in their approach to staff deployment. They recognised that staffing levels and expertise within the setting provided them with opportunities to upskill staff. Not only within their own setting, but for staff across Falkirk to provide outdoor opportunities for children. This contributed to staff being satisfied and motivated in their work and provided continuity of care for children from a committed and passionate staff team.

Staff wellbeing was a priority for the management team. An open door policy and one-to-one meetings meant staff felt valued, supported and listened to. The management team recognised and valued the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed at all times. Staff were flexible and breaks were planned to minimise the impact on children whilst making sure staff had time to rest and be refreshed.

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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

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

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