

Woodland Outdoor Kindergartens - West End Day Care of Children

137 Crow Road
Glasgow
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Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 25 August 2016

Service provided by:
Debison Albie Limited

Service provider number:
SP2009010399

Care service number:
CS2015336710

About the service

Woodland Outdoor Kindergartens - West End is a daycare of children service and is registered to provide care to a maximum of 24 children throughout the year. The age range of the children is from three years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is operated by a private provider.

The service was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 26 August 2015.

The service is provided exclusively outdoors using the woodlands area within Dawsholm Park. The service has suitable premises on Crow Road for use as a base, for a drop off and pick up point for children and parents. This is also used in adverse weather conditions instead of the outdoors. A mini bus takes children from the base to the woodland environment a short distance away.

Included in the services aims and objectives is: "Our outdoor kindergarten strives to create a challenging and stimulating environment for all children through child initiated, self-directed learning through play. Our staff follow each child's lead, make efforts to understand children's play as an expression of their individuality and intervene thoughtfully and constructively to take the learning forward. We offer a unique and innovative approach to early learning and childcare through outdoor learning thus providing a choice for parents who value this approach and the benefits it brings to their children."

What people told us

There were ten children present at the time of inspection. During the inspection we observed and spoke with the children individually or as part of a small group. The children were observed to be happy, enthusiastic, excited and comfortable within the base and woodland environments. They told us how they used the mini bus to get to the woodland, how that they choose the camps they visit and any resources that they wanted to take. Some children told us they climbed trees and made mint soup.

We received seven returned care standards questionnaires from the ten we distributed before the inspection and we had the opportunity to speak to a further six parents/carers as part of the inspection process. All parents/carers were very happy with the overall quality of care and learning experiences their child received at the service and all parents/carers felt the service had involved them and their child in developing the service, for example, asking for ideas and feedback. All of the written comments from parents/carers were very positive with regards to the quality of care and support, the environment, staffing and leadership and management. Comments included:

"WOK excellent, fantastic nursery, we can't praise it enough. Very lucky to be able to take advantage of it."

"My child absolutely adores going to the outdoor kindergarten. It is by far their favourite place... They have made a lot of friends and staff have always been excellent! My child loves playing in the woods and it does not matter if it is raining! I am so happy that there is such a wonderful kindergarten right in the heart of the west end. Our favourite activity at weekends is to go back to the woods where my child shows us the way to their favourite adventure camp!"

"The Outdoor Kindergarten is a unique environment. It encourages my child to lead play sessions and develops a strong awareness for the outdoors. The children choose what camps they want to visit. My child has developed good friendships and has fun."

"WOK west end goes beyond what we expected. Our child's confidence has noticeably improved and we don't think they ever have a bad day. Nothing seems like a 'chore' to the staff and the photographs they send are undoubtedly the highlight of our day. They never appear harried or pressed for time and are highly professional. Overall we couldn't be happier with WOK!"

"We are delighted that our child gets so much time outside.... Our child is so happy and positive about their time there. This is a credit to the staff and structure of WOK."

"My wife and I could not be happier with the level of care our child has been given at WOK. They have always enjoyed their time spent there and their confidence has grown throughout their time in the woods."

Self assessment

The Care Inspectorate received a fully completed self-assessment from the provider. The provider identified what it thought the service did well and gave examples of improvement in children's personal plans and children's involvement in managing risks. The self assessment identified some key areas that the provider believed could be improved and showed how the service intended to do this with practical timescales.

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

The staff team were observed respectfully welcoming children and parents on their arrival at the base. A small number of children had recently started at the service. The staff and children ensured that they were included, nurtured and supported on arrival and when preparing to leave for the woodland. As part of their transition to the service children and their parents visit the base and spend time in the woodland. This provides an opportunity for them to get to know the staff, become familiar with the arrangements and to ensure that it is a positive and meaningful experience for all.

Staff spoke sensitively and knowledgeably about children's individual care, learning and development needs and how by working in partnerships with parents they ensure positive outcomes for children. Parents spoke positively about staff's support and understanding of their child's needs. Children's personal plans clearly demonstrated how their health, welfare and safety needs were being met. For example; how they keep safe while in the camps and their settling in experiences. These plans were regularly reviewed by staff and parents with any significant changes recorded.

Children's learning journals sampled included detailed observations made by staff on how each child was progressing. These were accessible for parents to comment on and included children's achievements from home and within their community.

Some children attending the service had medical requirements. Staff explained how this was managed in the woodland, including safe storage and monitoring of temperatures to ensure medicines were stored according to manufacturer's instructions.

Management and staff were very knowledgeable about child protection procedures and there were effective systems in place. Management ensured that all staff received annual in-house training, were aware of their role and responsibilities and that all documentation was completed, submitted and shared, where required. Relevant information was displayed within the base to ensure that all adults were aware of their responsibilities in safe guarding children. This contributed towards the safety of all children.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The service operates exclusively outdoors using the woodland area within Dawsholm Park. Children confidently engaged in a range of child led experiences which challenged them and enriched their learning. For example: some children very competently used their skills to work out the different ways to climb a very large upturned fallen tree with a variety of surfaces. A child new to the service observed this and with the help of the older child successfully climbed the tree to a considerable height. Staff were on hand to assist, if required, throughout this experience. Some children were happily making cakes and painting using mud, water and some resources. A child told us all about the imaginary play of dinosaur land, in particular, the triceratops. We were shown the different areas within the camp where they went, how when they ate lots of leaves their tummy got bigger and how they took small drinks and crossed the water to get to the other side.

Children demonstrated a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe while outdoors and when travelling on the mini bus. Examples included: they told us the path they took to reach the mini bus at the base, how they had to wear a seat belt and how all the bags were put in a cage within the bus. On arrival at the park, children explained the route to the named camps and that if we saw a dog approaching, we had to stop and drop any sticks we had to keep safe. The children were observed carrying out this practice with pride and were praised by staff.

Staff accessed weather information at the start of each day and throughout the session to ensure children's safety and wellbeing at all times. Staff advised us that there have been very few two occasions that have prevented them from going to the woodland. On these few instances, the base is used and offers children a range of experiences including being outdoors.

A wide range of systems were in place to support staff to manage the safety and wellbeing of children attending. For example, infection control, opportunities for children to have a sleep if required, attending to accidents or incidents if they occurred and ensuring children kept hydrated and protected from the sun.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

We observed staff working with children and saw that interactions were positive, friendly and nurturing. We noted that staff also made time for parents/carers and that communication was respectful. Parents we spoke to during the inspection commented on the high level of professionalism of staff working with children.

We spoke to the staff team during the course of the inspection and found them to be enthusiastic and confident about their responsibility within the service. They were positive role models who supported each other and treated each other with respect and kindness. They were continuing to embed the key principles of the rights of the child, Building the Ambition and the wellbeing indicators from Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) into their practice, to ensure they achieved positive outcomes for children and their families.

Through effective systems for continuous professional development and review, staff had the opportunity to reflect on practice and identify training needs to support positive outcomes for children. For example: some staff participated in pedagogical leadership. Training planned included promoting children's creativity and language and literacy awareness. In addition, some staff were participating in a Bachelor of Arts degree in Childhood Practice, while others received support to meet their condition of registration with the SSSC.

New staff told us about the valuable induction process that was in place which helped prepare them for their specific role within the staff team. This comprised of policies and procedures, risk and safety within the woods, support available and best practice documents. This process respected and included staff during this time of their employment. Staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) or were in the process of registering within the required timescale.

The provider had established clear practical and written procedures that contributed to safe recruitment practices.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The motivated manager displayed a commitment to the continued development of the service. The service have effective procedures including applying the principles from Building the Ambition, the wellbeing indicators from GIRFEC and the quality indicators from How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare in place to plan, assess, monitor and evaluate the service and staff. Staff told us about strategies they used to support children's evaluation of play experiences. These recognised children's individual achievements and encouraged their personal reflection.

The provider, manager and staff team were committed to making improvements and were in the process of completing their first improvement plan and quality and standards report with a view to sharing it with parents. Priorities for improvement identified were outcome focused and included: review date for children's personal plans, external staff training, support for individual staff to be champions in developing the vision, values aims and strategic direction of the service. They intended to review and update their improvement plan regularly using contributions from children and their families. Parents we spoke with confirmed they felt involved, listened to and consulted about improvement plans.

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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