

Toybox Children's Centre Day Care of Children

Gairloch Primary School
Gairloch
IV21 2BP

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 February 2024

Service provided by:
Toybox Childrens Centre

Service provider number:
SP2003001879

Service no:
CS2003008711

About the service

Toybox Children's Centre is based in Gairloch on the west coast. It offers families in the local community affordable childcare and is seen by many as an invaluable resource which allows them to be able to work.

During term time, Toybox Children's Centre is registered to provide an early learning and childcare service for a maximum of 12 children not yet attending primary school, of whom no more than 6 are aged under 2 years and no more than 10 are aged 2 to those not yet attending primary school. During school holidays, the service is registered to provide an early learning and childcare service to a maximum of 16 children of whom no more than 6 are aged under 2 years, no more than 10 are aged 2 to those not yet attending primary school, and no more than 6 are attending primary school.

The service is based within Gairloch Primary School. It has use of a playroom with kitchen facilities, reception area, toilet and nappy changing facilities. There is an enclosed outdoor play area directly accessible from the playroom. The service can also access the school playground and playing fields for energetic physical play during school holidays.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 5 February 2024 and Friday 9 February 2024. 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 two staff and the manager
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced very warm, caring and nurturing interactions from staff.
- Children were very happy, settled and having lots of fun.
- Play opportunities supported children's curiosity, enquiry, and creativity.
- The service provided affordable, flexible childcare for families in the local community.
- Staff worked very well together as a team and were committed to providing a quality service to children and their families.
- Quality assurance systems involving children, families and staff should continue to be developed to plan for improvement.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - 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?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 1.1 : Nurturing care & support

Children were happy, settled and enjoyed their time at nursery. Staff supported children's care and learning routines with kindness and compassion, which contributed to the development of strong and trusting relationships. Children experienced warm, kind, nurturing and responsive approaches to their personal care and learning needs. We observed staff who skilfully provided reassurance, praised children and offered cuddles and love when needed. This supported children to feel happy, loved and secure and promoted an inclusive care setting where all children mattered.

Children's wellbeing was supported by staff who knew them very well. Staff could confidently discuss children and their individual needs and the strategies to support them. This meant that all children were respected and valued as individuals and their health and wellbeing needs were being met. Each child attending the service had a personal plan. We reminded the manager that all personal plans should be completed and routinely reviewed in partnership with parents to ensure that they reflect children's current needs and the strategies required to meet these needs. We also discussed including monitoring and auditing of personal plans as part of the service's quality assurance process.

Snack and lunchtimes were relaxed, sociable and unhurried. Children were well supported during lunch and staff praised and encouraged them to eat independently. Staff sat with children, which provided opportunities to form and maintain relationships and support language and communication skills. This meant that children enjoyed a positive lunchtime experience.

Safe sleep routines supported children's emotional wellbeing, and the individual needs of children and family wishes were followed. Staff supported children to settle and sleep, and offered home comforters as required. Sleeping children were supervised appropriately with regular checks completed. We recommended that the manager and staff review their practice to ensure that it was in line with current safe sleep guidelines.

Children and families benefitted from a service that valued the importance of establishing strong working relationships with families to support children. This ensured that children received appropriate levels of consistent care and support. There was daily communication with families at drop off and collection time and there were opportunities for parents to spend time in the nursery. We observed parents being made to feel very welcome when they came into the setting to collect their children.

Quality indicator 1.3 : Play and Learning

Play and learning opportunities impacted positively on children's development, health, wellbeing and happiness. For the majority of the time, children benefitted from uninterrupted play, allowing them to become absorbed in their play.

Throughout the inspection, we saw children who were having fun. There was lots of laughter and giggles as they played and when interacting with staff.

The children were engaged as they experimented and explored with a good balance of planned and spontaneous play opportunities. Children were offered good opportunities to be imaginative and creative in their explorative play and investigative learning. Play spaces were well resourced and promoted learning through real life experiences. Good use was being made of loose parts and open ended resources to enrich children's play and learning.

Planning approaches within the nursery were child centred, which enabled children to actively lead their own play and learning experiences. Staff engaged with children's interests and effectively supported them. Staff offered individualised support to children during their play, being aware of when to engage and when to step back. Staff understood their role in supporting children's development and were adding further value to children's play and learning through their carefully considered interactions. They naturally engaged effectively with children and showed interest.

Children had opportunities to develop language, literacy and numeracy skills through activities such as singing, storytelling and mark making. The reading area was cosy and comfortable and children used this space well to enjoy a range of books and sit with staff as they read stories together. This encouraged and supported children to develop their skills in language and literacy. Staff were creative in terms of the use of messy play. We saw all the children being very engaged with a messy and sensory painting activity.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 2.2 : Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a clean, welcoming and homely nursery with plenty of natural light and good ventilation. Although there was limited space due to the size of the nursery play room, the staff ensured that the layout allowed the children to freely move around. Overall, children experienced developmentally appropriate spaces that met most of their needs.

Comfortable soft furnishings helped the environment to feel calm and welcoming. Distinct areas had been set up to facilitate a range of play and learning experiences and resources were accessible, enabling children to lead their own learning. There was a comfortable, cosy area for the youngest children to safely sleep away from busier areas of the playroom.

Ensuring a healthy and safe environment which promoted children's wellbeing was important to the management and staff team. There was a system to report any repairs and damaged items were replaced. Daily checks of the premises were completed and there were risk assessments in place to ensure that the environment was safe for the children attending.

Appropriate infection prevention and control practices were in place to minimise the spread of infection. For example, the setting was clean and well maintained. Food safety practices were appropriate and provided good levels of safety for children. We observed children being supported to understand the need for good hygiene and hand washing at appropriate times throughout the day. Following the previous inspection, an area for improvement was identified in relation to the facilities for nappy changing. The manager explained that they were continuing to liaise with the local authority to ensure that nappy changing and toilet facilities were appropriate and were in line with current best practice guidance.

Children's safety was well managed as staff were attentive and alert to children's movements. Tools such as updated registers and regular headcounts helped children to move safely around the setting. Children's security and safety was respected because of the measures in place.

We discussed ways in which the outdoor area could be further developed to promote multi-sensory outdoor play, as well as stimulating children's natural curiosity. We explained to the manager and staff where they could access best practice such as; 'My World Outdoors,' 'Loose parts' and 'Space to Grow' to get ideas as to how they could continue to improve the setting.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 3.1 : Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The manager and staff fully engaged in the inspection process and welcomed the guidance and the signposting to various websites and best practice offered by the inspector. The manager and the staff demonstrated their commitment to the service and were motivated to make improvements to ensure positive outcomes for children.

The manager and staff worked very closely to provide positive outcomes for children and their families. They promoted a warm, caring, nurturing experience for all children. They had a shared vision, values and aims to provide flexible and affordable childcare to families in the local community.

Following the previous inspection, the manager had introduced a more robust system of quality assurance to support the development and improvement of the service. The manager explained that the improvement plan for the service was very much focussed on the requirement and areas for improvement identified following the previous Care Inspectorate inspection. We were able to see what progress had been made in relation to meeting the action points identified in the improvement plan and how these had impacted positively on children's experiences and outcomes.

Appropriate quality assurance processes were in place to allow for the quality of the service to be monitored and assessed in a focussed and meaningful way. For example, there were regular audits and monitoring of observations and tracking, and staff were encouraged to be more involved in the self evaluation process. These developments had resulted in improvements to the quality of personal plans, observations and next steps, which in turn impacted positively on outcomes for children.

Staff had opportunities to meaningfully contribute and be part of the evaluation process. There were now regular formal team meetings where all staff were supported to reflect on the service provided, evaluate learning opportunities and resources available. Staff had annual appraisal meetings and the manager had also introduced formal support and supervision meetings. There was also opportunity for regular informal discussions during the manager's visits to the setting.

The manager and staff continued to encourage parents to be involved in the ongoing development of the service. They welcomed parents into the setting, and to give any feedback and suggestions which might improve outcomes for children. Parents were also invited to be part of the committee, attend committee meetings and to become actively involved in decision making and the running of the nursery.

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 quality indicator as very good.

Quality indicator 4.3 : Staff deployment

The deployment of staff was well managed and effective to meet children's needs. Children were cared for by a consistent staff team who worked well together.

Children benefited from a caring and nurturing staff team. It was a small team who had worked together for a number of years. We observed staff being very welcoming, kind and nurturing in their approach. It was evident through discussions and our observations that they were all very motivated and committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming setting where all children mattered. Staff talked knowledgeably about children's individual needs, next steps and how they were being met. Staff demonstrated an awareness of when and how to effectively intervene, picking up on cues to support children's wellbeing and extend their play and experiences. They were responsive and respectful of children during interactions and play which supported children to feel safe, secure and happy. Children enjoyed spending time with staff and were comfortable in their company.

Staff were warm, caring and sensitive and demonstrated positive team working. They worked well together and their differing skills and knowledge complemented one another and resulted in quality interactions with children. Staff communicated effectively with each other and worked flexibly to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. This promoted a happy and secure environment where children were encouraged to lead their own play and learning.

Children benefited from effective supervision and quality engagement throughout the day. Staff were empowered to deploy themselves and respond to the needs of the children. This enabled staff to follow children's needs and interests without compromising the experiences of others. Transitions were seamless and well planned, with children being comfortable about what was happening next. During busier times of the day, routines had been established which promoted children's safety.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 30 June 2023, the provider must ensure improved outcomes for children and practice by implementing effective systems of quality assurance. To do this the provider must, at a minimum, ensure:

- a) regular and effective support and supervision for all staff is implemented
- b) staff are supported to develop their knowledge and understanding around self-evaluation processes and are involved in the systematic evaluation of their work and the work of the service

- c) clear and effective plans are in place for maintaining and improving the service
- d) the management team effectively monitors the work of each member of staff and the service as a whole
- e) clear systems are in place for children and their families to provide feedback and to be actively involved in the evaluation of the service provided.

This is to comply with the - Regulation 3 Principles and Regulation 15 (a) and (b) Staffing of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210). (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011, SSI 2011/210.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.19)

This requirement was made on 3 March 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

In response to the requirement, the service had introduced measures to improve systems for quality assurance. They had begun to use self evaluation and audit tools as part of their quality assurance processes. These included a quality assurance calendar to support the service with keeping processes on track.

Regular staff meetings took place. These were being used to encourage greater involvement of staff in the self evaluation process, as well as sharing information and keeping staff up to date with best practice. There was regular informal discussion between the staff and the manager and formal meetings had been arranged to monitor staff practice and to provide effective support and supervision for staff.

We saw evidence of how families' views were sought to inform the development of the service. For example, parents had been invited to attend and be part of committee meetings and to be actively involved in decision making. There was daily informal contact with parents and they were also encouraged to spend time in the setting. The manager explained that they were looking to make use of questionnaires to increase parental engagement.

The manager acknowledged the importance of continuing to develop and embed their quality assurance system and ensure it is having an impact on all areas of practice. This would contribute to improved outcomes for all.

The requirement has been fully met.

Met - within timescales

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To support children's health and wellbeing, the provider should ensure that effective infection prevention and control practices are in place for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS 4.11)

This is also to ensure that the premises are consistent with best practice guidance 'Space to Grow'.

This area for improvement was made on 3 March 2023.

Action taken since then

Good infection prevention and control practices were in place. For example, the setting was clean, we observed good hand hygiene practices and staff offered children appropriate support and guidance to wash their hands at different times during the session.

At the time of the previous inspection, staff were using the children's toilet facilities for nappy changing rather than the designated nappy changing room. This arrangement did not meet best practice guidance. The designated nappy changing room was extremely small and there was no natural light. Several of the very young children became upset if they were changed there and the decision was made to use the toilet facilities.

The manager had been in discussion with the owner of the property, the local authority, to review the existing nappy changing facilities to ensure they were fit for purpose and met the health and wellbeing needs of the children attending.

This area for improvement has been met.

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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - 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

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