

Stramash Outdoor Nursery Tornagrain Day Care of Children

1 Mid Coul Court
Tornagrain
Inverness
IV2 8BD

Telephone: 01361 466 080

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 February 2025

Service provided by:
Stramash Social Enterprise

Service provider number:
SP2011011702

Service no:
CS2018367082

About the service

Stramash Outdoor Nursery Tornagrain is a daycare of children service and is registered to provide care to a maximum of 34 children aged two years to those not yet attending Primary School of whom no more than 10 children can be aged between two and three years.

The service operates from a community building as their base, which includes two playrooms, toilets, and nappy changing facilities for the younger children, with an adjoining woodland area, garden, and allotment as their outdoor space located in the village of Tornagrain.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 24 February 2025 and Tuesday 25 February 2025. 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 children attending the service.
- Reviewed feedback from 22 parents and carers.
- Spoke with staff and the manager.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children benefitted from a rich outdoor learning environment.
- Children were very happy and engaged and having fun taking part in a range of activities.
- Children experienced very warm, caring and nurturing support from staff who knew them very well.
- Children were developing their curiosity, imagination and problem solving skills through high quality play experiences.
- Staff worked well as a team and were committed to providing children with a service of a very high standard.
- Positive relationships with families supported continuity of care and effective partnerships.
- The manager and staff were committed to the ongoing development of 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?	4 - 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?

4 - Good

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

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were all very happy, settled and having fun as they played alongside or with friends. We observed that positive relationships had been formed between staff and the children. Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to their personal care and learning needs. This contributed to children feeling happy and secure. There was a great deal of chatter and laughter between the children and the staff. We saw staff being very nurturing, taking time to listen to and respond to children, and offering comfort, cuddles and reassurance when needed. This contributed to positive attachments being formed and children having a sense of belonging and feeling valued.

Staff were welcoming and friendly with an enabling attitude and knew children very well. To support children to be happy and confident, staff had effectively used personal plans to enhance individualised care, support and learning opportunities. Personal plans provided information to support individual children and were used consistently by staff. They were completed and routinely reviewed in partnership with parents to ensure that they reflected children's current needs and the strategies required to meet these needs. Staff could confidently discuss children and their individual needs and the strategies to support them.

Where children required additional support, staff had established good working relationships with other agencies and were confident in their role in liaising with them. They worked closely with various professionals, including Speech and Language Therapy, Education Psychology and health visitors, to ensure consistency in their approach. As a result, children experienced a collaborative approach to their care and development.

Children and families benefited 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. Parents were very positive about the level of information they received at collection time and stated that they were actively encouraged to give feedback and ask questions. Parents described staff as very approachable, 'The staff is kind and approachable', 'the staff are great, they have genuine connections to the children and do everything they can to provide a fantastic experience', 'Staff have a hugely positive impact on my child's experience', 'Staff are fantastic. The staff make the nursery a fun and welcoming place for the children'.

Children experienced calm, relaxed and sociable lunch and snack times where they were encouraged to develop important independence skills. Staff were focused on the children during this time and provided appropriate levels of individualised support and supervision. Staff were aware of any allergies or dietary needs which helped them to keep children safe. Staff sat with children which provided opportunities to form and maintain relationships, and support language and communication skills.

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.

Stramash Outdoor Nursery provided children with a nurturing and exciting space to grow and develop through nature-based play and learning. This allowed children to develop self confidence, independence and self esteem. Children played happily and purposefully together engaging in real life experiences which enhanced their resilience and impacted positively on their development, health, wellbeing and happiness. They had fun and were very comfortable within their natural surroundings. Parents described how attending the outdoor nursery had provided opportunities for their children to 'be free and have a slow pace childhood', and 'become more confident'.

Children were supported to learn and develop through their play. They experienced both spontaneous and planned play experiences and were supported in leading their play and learning and were able to make choices. Children were offered stimulating and interesting experiences which included exploring, experimenting, being creative, taking risks and problem solving. These rich learning experiences promoted curiosity and imagination. We observed children being very happy, engaged and leading their play and learning throughout the session.

Planning approaches were child led and responsive to children's interests which supported children to feel involved and empowered. There were floor books which were used to record children's interests and illustrated how interests were extended and developed. Children were given ownership of their play and encouraged to be independent. Staff supported children, allowing them to plan, lead their play and make choices at their own pace. This helped children to feel secure and settled. Children's successes and achievements were recognised and celebrated, helping them develop a sense of pride, build resilience and support their self-esteem.

Staff were adding further value to children's play and learning through their carefully considered interactions. They naturally engaged with children and demonstrated a genuine interest in the children and what they were doing. Staff were able to support, extend and challenge children's thinking. Questioning by staff encouraged children to think independently and to reflect. As a result children were respected, valued and achieving.

We recognised good quality play, learning and development was taking place during the inspection. Children had the opportunity to develop their numeracy and literacy skills and mathematical language while taking part in activities across the setting. For example, staff made good use of songs, rhymes and reading books to encourage children's vocabulary and language skills. Children had the opportunity to develop their numeracy and literacy skills and mathematical language while playing with real life and open ended resources across the setting. We discussed with the manager and staff how they could further embed opportunities for the development of numeracy and literacy skills across the setting.

Families were meaningfully engaged in their child's play, learning and development. Staff ensured that parents were well informed of children's learning, progression and next steps and were encouraged to give their feedback. Regular updates and photographs were posted on the online platform and shared with parents. These updates were very much appreciated by parents.

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 quality indicator as very good.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Stramash Outdoor Nursery Tornagrain was a fully outdoor service, which offered children a large natural environment where they could be adventurous, explore, be independent and develop a range of physical skills in calm and peaceful surroundings. There was also a wooden cabin which provided children shelter during poor weather.

The nursery site was well thought out and provided a stimulating space where children comfortably engaged with nature. There were very good opportunities for children to be imaginative and creative in their explorative play and investigative learning while developing new skills. Positive approaches to supporting risky and adventurous play were fully embedded within practice. There were opportunities for the children to assess and manage risk and build self confidence. They had access to a wide range of engaging and challenging resources and activities; for example, open-ended and natural resources, mud kitchen, digging area, extensive loose parts, den building and water play. Staff routinely reviewed children's use of resources and areas to make sure that children were engaged and challenged.

We found children enthusiastically engaged in activities. They were able to direct their own play and activities in a way that they chose and had the time and space to develop their own interests. We observed the children moving comfortably and confidently around the site and selecting various activities, either on their own or in small groups. Their natural environment continuously challenged and developed their physical confidence.

Children attending the service were kept safe by the high staffing levels and the staff confidently deploying themselves to where they were needed to ensure that children were appropriately supervised. There were various risk assessments and safety checks which were in place to ensure hazards were minimised. Staff explained that they completed daily visual checks before the children arrived as well as throughout the day.

Staff fully involved the children in risk assessments and problem-solving to build their confidence and skills in assessing risk and safe decision-making. Children explored the site with ease and were confident in recognising potential risks and ensuring their own safety and the safety of others.

Children were enabled to rest and have quiet time. They could rest in various areas including hammocks in the woodland area, the story corners as well as a cosy sleep area within the cabin. On the second day of the inspection, a large tent had been set up where the children enjoyed having stories read to them.

Robust infection prevention and control practices were in place to support a safe environment and children's health and wellbeing. For example, children washed their hands with warm running water and robust cleaning routines had been established.

How good is our leadership?

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 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are well led

Children and families experienced a welcoming, warm and inclusive ethos that valued them as partners. A culture of continuous improvement was embraced by staff, which enabled children to have consistently positive experiences. This resulted in a very happy, safe and supportive environment for children and their families.

The manager promoted a positive attitude to change and recognised the importance of including all relevant stakeholders in developing a shared vision to secure quality outcomes for the children. For example, the manager had included the children, families and staff in the recent review of the vision, values and aims of the nursery.

The management and staff demonstrated their commitment to the service and were very motivated to make improvements to ensure they continued to support children to reach their full potential. There were quality assurance systems in place, including self evaluation and an improvement plan, to ensure that the quality of the service was monitored and assessed in a focused and meaningful way. There was a quality assurance calendar in place that ensured purposeful audits of various aspects of the nursery were routinely carried out.

The manager spent time with the staff and children to monitor the setting and observe staff practice to ensure children received high quality play and learning experiences. The manager also met with staff to discuss the continuous improvement of the service to secure progression and positive outcomes for children. There were regular staff meetings which provided time for the manager and all staff to reflect on their practice, identifying what they do well for children in their care, and highlight areas for development across the service. This contributed to staff feeling valued and listened to. Staff confidently told us about improvements to the service they had been actively involved in.

The community ethos of the nursery was reflected in the manager and staff's positive relationships with families. Engaging children and their families in the ongoing evaluation and improvement of the service was important to the manager and staff. They had established positive working relationships with families which supported regular communication by way of daily informal verbal feedback, via an online app as well as more formal methods such as questionnaires. Parents appreciated the regular community days and online catch ups where they could provide any feedback, suggestions and comments they might have about the service. Parents commented 'The nursery likes to involve parents and carers with community catch ups throughout the year', 'The nursery asks for and listens to feedback', 'Staff are always keen to hear our views' and 'we have had parent video calls where we have been encouraged to share views and to find out what is happening in 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. Staff promoted a very happy and welcoming environment where children were valued and respected. We observed staff being very kind and nurturing in their approach.

It was evident through discussions and our observations that they were very motivated and committed to providing an inclusive, welcoming setting where all children mattered and were at the heart of the service. This was supported by the parents. Parental comments included 'Stramash always have lots of staff on. The children are always supervised, supported and having their play extended', 'they (staff) are all nurturing, helpful, flexible and really invested in the setting' and 'Every member of staff I've spoken to is personable, friendly and interested in what I've said/asked. Nothing is ever too much bother and it really feels like they know and care for each child individually'.

Staff were all very 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. Good use was made of walkie talkies. Staff were aware of how many children were in the service and took regular head counts throughout the session. This promoted a happy and secure environment where children were encouraged to lead their own play and learning.

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.

Children benefited from effective supervision and quality engagement throughout the day. The service was well staffed which allowed children to make full use of the different areas across the setting. Staff were empowered to deploy themselves flexibly 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, for example mealtimes and home time, routines had been established which promoted children's safety.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

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?	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

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 cànan 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.