

Merkland Playscheme Day Care of Children

Merkland School
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Unannounced

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Service provided by:

East Dunbartonshire Council

Service provider number:

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CS2004063770

About the service

Merkland Playscheme is an East Dunbartonshire Council service for children with additional support for learning needs. The service is located in Merkland School in Kirkintilloch and operates in school holiday periods only.

The service is registered to accommodate a maximum of 20 primary school aged children at any one time.

The service aims to provide a range of fun activities within a safe environment.

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service to ensure they have the best start in life, are ready to succeed and live longer, healthier lives. The Care Inspectorate has an important role to play in supporting this approach in inspecting care services for children.

The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. It's a consistent way for people to work with all children and young people. The approach helps practitioners focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people, and how they can act to deliver these improvements. Getting it Right for Every Child is being threaded through all existing policy, practice, strategy and legislation affecting children, young people and their families.

In Scotland, the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach puts wellbeing at the very heart of its approach. The eight 'indicators' of wellbeing that form the basis of GIRFEC are: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included, often referred to as 'SHANARRI'.

What people told us

We issued 20 Care Standards Questionnaires to the service to distribute to parents prior to the inspection taking place. We received nine completed questionnaires. All responses from parents were positive.

Written comments included:

"Two of my children use this service which provides an excellent service not only to them but allows for the rest of the family to get respite, albeit for a few hours".

"My son absolutely loves the playscheme and would be devastated if he didn't get a place. The staff are all wonderful and I hope it continues for years to come".

"My son attends playscheme twice a year and always asks when he is going back which makes us all extremely happy as he doesn't show such enthusiasm with other activities outwith school".

"My son loved the playscheme from his first introduction prior to applying for a placement. This was the first new place he was happy to go to without needing family to accompany. He eagerly awaits the bus and asks me every holiday if he's going to playscheme despite our own family holidays. He loves it".

"From the very first day my child was warmly welcomed by staff. Staff read notes about my child and so can have instant connections and form a good relationship. My child has worked with many staff who have all been excellent. My child's self esteem and confidence has grown and I feel happy leaving my child as I know she will have a great day".

"Both my kids attend the service during school holiday periods. They look forward to attending and enjoy their time immensely. Thank you for this great service which allows my kids to integrate with others outwith the family, as they are both very socially awkward".

We also spoke with one parent at the service. She told us she was very happy with the service as it was exactly what her child needed. As a first time parent she felt that her child's needs were met and he was comfortable in the setting. She commented that staff were great and were good at picking up on how parents were feeling and responding to that - providing feedback on their child during the day to provide reassurance. She told us that her child had fairly complex health needs and she was satisfied that staff responded very well to this. She said that staff were happy to spend time chatting with her. She commended the daily communication sheet. She commented that the service was very inclusive and her child was able to provide examples of this in practice.

We looked at parent service evaluations completed by parents in Summer 2017.

Comments included;

"It is a fantastic service which also gives us a much needed break".

"Staff at Merkland are wonderful with the children and it is the only place my child has been where he seems happy when he comes home".

"I think the playscheme is great and my child has a wonderful time".

We chatted with two children who told us they liked coming to the playscheme. One child told us about her gymnastics and gave us a demonstration. Another child described how he was building a castle.

We observed children engaging well during lunchtime. Children chatted with staff about their lunch and activities they wanted to do after lunch. Overall, children were happy, settled and enjoying the day.

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at their own improvement plan and quality assurance paperwork. These demonstrated their priorities for development and how they were monitoring the quality of the provision within the service.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	6 - Excellent
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

What the service does well

The quality of care and support in the service was excellent.

Care was provided by very well trained staff on a 1:1 adult/child ratio. Staff skills, expertise and experience enabled them to provide tailored, child centred, responsive care to children. Children benefitted greatly from this. Staff supported children to lead their play and learning at their own pace and make choices and decisions.

The manager and staff were highly motivated, professional and informed. Their involvement in daily professional dialogue, group discussions, observations of children and communication /consultation with parents and children promoted an inclusive and reflective approach to care and learning.

The headteacher and depute headteacher of the school volunteered to assist during the playscheme to provide care for children with specific needs who attended the school during term time and for whom their support was integral to a successful placement.

Personal plans for children were very well documented and demonstrated that staff had very good knowledge of children and their families. This practice supported very positive outcomes for children.

Staff had a sound understanding of how to protect and safeguard children. A robust child protection policy and procedure was in place which informed and supported staff in their roles. Staff attended regular child protection training which kept them up-to-date with current best practice and refreshed their knowledge and understanding of child protection. Staff were sensitive and respectful in implementing the child protection policy.

The manager and staff provided a very safe environment for children. A 1:1 adult/child ratio, individual child risk assessments, secure accommodation and familiar daily routines meant that transitions for children were positive and children settled easily and quickly.

Although the environment required a degree of maintenance, staff had arranged the rooms to create warm, nurturing and productive play spaces. Observations of practice highlighted that children were treated with respect by staff: staff listened attentively to their ideas for play and activities. Children enjoyed access to a wide range of quality resources and free flow indoor /outdoor play. Staff created small, quiet, sensory spaces and calm environments for children as well as larger, busy productive areas. Some staff used their coaching expertise to engage children in gymnastics, basketball, touch rugby and badminton. Children also enjoyed SFA (Scottish Football Association) football coaching.

What the service could do better

The service should continue to take forward the priorities identified in their improvement plan. The provider should improve the environment for children by decorating rooms used, repairing window blinds and upgrading outdoor surfaces. See recommendation 1.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The provider should upgrade the environment for children, in particular decorating the classrooms, repairing or replacing window blinds and upgrading outdoor surfaces.

Health and Social Care Standards 5.22 - I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
28 Jul 2015	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 6 - Excellent Management and leadership 5 - Very good
25 Jul 2012	Unannounced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 6 - Excellent Management and leadership 5 - Very good
17 Feb 2010	Unannounced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 5 - Very good

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