

Lothian Autistic Society in West Lothian Day Care of Children

Lothian Autistic Society
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Telephone: 0131 661 3834

Type of inspection:

Unannounced

Completed on:

27 July 2018

Service provided by:

Lothian Autistic Society

Service provider number:

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Service no:

CS2003011786

About the service

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at www.careinspectorate.com.

Lothian Autistic Society in West Lothian, referred to as the service in this report, has been registered with the Care Inspectorate since April 2011. Conditions of its registration state that care can be provided to a maximum of 30 children at any one time aged five years to 18 years of age. Other conditions unique to the service states that it must operate from local authority school premises; and staffing ratios will be set to meet the needs of children attending.

There are two parts to the service which complement each other throughout the year. The Saturday Club runs alternate Saturdays to offer daytime respite; provide access to community activities; and improve social and emotional learning through play. The Playscheme runs through school holidays to offer respite; support children to try new activities, build friendships, relax and have fun. Both parts of the service are referral based through the local authority. The Playscheme is split into junior and senior sessions to ensure the different age groups are catered for.

The service is delivered from Ogilvie School Campus in a residential area of Livingston, served by good transport links. Space used by the service includes a large gym hall, a corridor area with small rooms leading off, a kitchen, toilets and a large secure outdoor area leading from the gym hall.

As part of the larger organisation Lothian Autistic Society, main aims are set across all of their services:

- Provide a fun, supportive environment that allows each individual to flourish
- Provide the opportunity to try new activities and have new experiences
- Gain a sense of achievement through overcoming challenges
- Increase self-esteem
- Build confidence and social skills within a well-structured, safe environment
- Form lasting friendships

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (also known as GIRFEC), Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with the services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, included.

What people told us

There were 18 young people attending the senior part of the play scheme over the two days of inspection. They moved around the space comfortably, engaging with each other, the staff and the activities. A few young people wanted to talk about their time in the service and said:

"I like to eat here."

"It's got nice people and it's kind and friendly."

"I like the soft play room."

"We go on trips to Linlithgow Palace."

"I like the lego and the wii. I play bowling."

The service was asked to distribute 20 care standard questionnaires to parents prior to inspection. The seven

which were returned indicated all parents agreed or strongly agreed that they were happy with the overall service provided for their child.

Some comments were as follows:

"The LAS in West Lothian has built up my child's confidence. As a result she has (at long last) found her first best friend. This group was the first group not to judge children's behaviour; but to support the children and parents. Staff are very warm, friendly and professional; they make everyone feel welcome; strong leadership."

"This service has helped my child become more sociable. He now talks of friends at the club which is a huge positive step forward for him."

"Could not fault Lothian Autistic Society. My daughter loves going and it's great to see a smile on her face on going in. The staff are always polite and give us lots of information on what they did that day. A fantastic service!"

We also spoke to four parents during inspection who were keen to talk about how the service has impacted positively on their family life. Some comments were:

"It's a life saver for us as we had nothing before this. It helps his social life hugely as he wouldn't leave the house. He plays with friends here. He feels safe and comfortable. I never worry about him as he's looked after."

"My child can be challenging. Staff are trained to cope and calm him down. The Playscheme breaks up the summer holidays so we get a break. Staff move around so the children get to know everyone so get used to different people. The venue change has been great."

"Kids love coming here. We got an information pack before we came with visual timetables so kids could look at it too."

"Over the years my child has been coming here we have seen remarkable changes in her. Her social skills have improved hugely, her life skills and friend circle. The staff are amazing, professional and empathic to our child's needs. I would like to express my warmest gratitude and thanks to all staff and volunteers at Lothian Autistic Society (West Lothian branch)."

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self assessment prior to inspection. The manager provided us with a quarterly service action plan which outlined their short term priorities.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

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

What the service does well

Children experienced welcoming, warm, fun and inclusive relationships with staff. They were respected because staff understood and were committed to ensuring dignity and autonomy at all times. The 1:1 or 2:1 adult/child ratio was managed in an enabling and supportive way to ensure children had freedom and choice.

A real strength of the service was how well each child remained at the centre of all decisions. Detailed information on children's health and wellbeing needs was recorded to inform staff and guide their responses. Parents and children were involved in creating personal plans which was empowering and ensured up to date information. Children benefited from consistent approaches with clear strategies based on their strengths and interests. The service was developing their recording to include goals and small steps of progress. This would assist progress to be tracked, extended and shared with parents every six months.

Health and wellbeing needs were consistently met in a variety of ways. Positive working relationships with external agencies ensured the right help was planned for children at the right time. Children were kept safe from harm because staff were knowledgeable about their responsibilities for sharing information. Free access to the outdoors offered fresh air and physical activity in a varied natural environment. Non-verbal cues were picked up quickly by staff and responded to which contributed to children's involvement in deciding their own care.

Children had a range of resources and experiences to choose from however a responsive approach encouraged children to change and direct the content of each day, such as park outings. We accompanied children to the local park where staff used their knowledge of each child to ensure it was a safe and stimulating experience. New experiences were introduced by visiting agencies coming to the children's safe space making them accessible and inclusive. An example of this was an art agency who provided the activity whilst staff supported children to engage. We also saw children enjoying a visit from a staff members rabbits. This experience allowed children to hold and take care of the animals, learning about their needs and routines.

Management ensured safe recruitment of staff and an induction programme to provide knowledge, understanding and strategies needed to provide a very good quality of care for children. The shared leadership approach was enabling and empowering, assisting increased confidence, skills and experience for staff. This reflected the overall nurturing ethos evident throughout the service.

What the service could do better

The service had identified a need to focus more on the benefits of play to enhance child development, wellbeing and communication. During feedback we discussed a variety of ways to bring more creativity, challenge and risk to children, appropriate to their age and stage of development. We referred the service to the Health and Social Care Standards to help with this.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

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
8 Jul 2015	Unannounced	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 6 - Excellent Management and leadership 6 - Excellent
17 Jul 2012	Announced (short notice)	Care and support 6 - Excellent Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 6 - Excellent Management and leadership 6 - Excellent
24 Aug 2009	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 5 - Very good

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