

Treetops Nursery Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 June 2023

Service provided by:
Collin Care Limited

Service provider number:
SP2008009795

Service no:
CS2012306655

About the service

Treetops Nursery is registered to provide a daycare of children service to a maximum of 45 children aged: six children under two years, 15 children aged two years to under three years and 24 children aged three years to those not attending primary school.

Care is provided from a single storey property, which is located in a quiet residential area of Irvine, North Ayrshire. The service is close to shops, public transport routes and local amenities.

Care is provided from a dedicated birth to two room with one further open-plan room divided into dedicated spaces for children aged two to three and three to five years old. Children also have access to outdoor play in enclosed garden areas.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 13 June 2023 between 09:10 and 15:30. Feedback was provided to the manager on Thursday 15 June 2023. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 using the service and two of their family members
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Staff were nurturing, caring and compassionate ensuring children felt secure, loved and valued.
- Staff knew children well and supported their individual needs.
- Management had a vision for the service and clear plans for improvement.
- Staff were flexible and supportive of each other. They worked well as a team to support and care for children as individuals.
- A positive atmosphere of mutual trust and respect was promoting a happy, secure and supportive environment for children and their families.
- Staff should continue to build as a team on their experience and expertise, to fully meet children's needs through high quality interactions. Extending children's thinking and widening their skills to support them to develop their curiosity, creativity and leading on their play and learning.
- Personal plans should be further developed and streamlined with a focus on detailed support strategies and next steps linked to clearer progression pathways.
- Management and staff should continue to review and evaluate children's play spaces both indoors and outside with full consideration being given to the experiences for younger children.

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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - 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.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to support their overall wellbeing. Children had formed secure attachments to staff and staff were responsive to children's physical and emotional needs, helping to promote self-esteem, confidence and independence. As a result children were happy and settled.

Staff used meaningful praise, chatting and singing to children as they supported them. Staff consistently got down to children's level when interacting with them. Families commented positively on the relationships that their children had developed with staff. This supported children to feel valued and loved. One parent told us "they have the kids best interest at heart."

Staff knew children well and could talk about different individual needs of children and were aware of how to support children. Personal care needs were delivered in a warm, kind and respectful manner. For example, children were asked if they would like to have their nappy changed or their nose wiped. This supported staff in respecting children's rights. One parent told us "they treat [my child] with respect and dignity at their own individual level."

All children had a personal plan. Parents were included in creating personal plans for children, identifying areas where their child needed support. However, not all plans contained clear strategies to support children's needs. Further consideration needs to be given to recording strategies that are clear and relevant to individual child. We signposted the service to the Care Inspectorate's 'Guide for providers on personal planning', which can be found on the Care Inspectorate hub.

Medication was stored appropriately and was easily accessible. Boxes were clearly labelled with children's names. This was accompanied with medication records which meant that where children required medication at nursery, this could be administered safely. However, there were some inconsistencies in the information recorded, with some medical permissions lacking detail. We suggested developing a medication audit to identify and action this to improve the safe delivery of medication.

Appropriate arrangements were in place to support children who slept while at nursery. Staff closely supervised children and ensured each child had individual bedding, which contributed to providing a safe, comfortable sleep time for children. This also reflected routines from home.

Children enjoyed a calm, relaxed and unhurried mealtime with opportunities to develop their independence through self-serving. We observed lunchtime to be a time for children and staff to sit together, talk and connect. This experience promoted children to develop skills in literacy and numeracy through conversation and problem solving, as well as promoting their independence. This promoted a positive lunch time experience.

Fresh water was easily accessible to encourage children to remain hydrated throughout the day.

Allergies and food preferences were carefully considered and staff confidently discussed the processes they used to support children with dietary needs, keeping them safe from harm. Children allergies were clearly identified and recorded within sheets and shared with staff as part of the induction.

Children were safe and protected from harm with clear policies and procedures in place relating to child protection. Staff clearly understood the role they played in this and had all undertaken annual child protection training. The manager acted as child protection officer, ensuring a robust system was in place and we were confident that any child protection matters would be responded to appropriately.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children had fun while at nursery. Their play and learning was supported by having access to a range of play spaces where they also had the opportunity to use their imagination and explore their natural curiosity. Children were involved in play experiences that helped develop their skills in language, literacy, and numeracy. For example, counting how many scoops of sand it would take to fill a bucket, using mathematical language such as more and less during their interactions with staff. The service should continue to develop on these opportunities to ensure progression in children's learning and development.

Staff were beginning to develop a deeper understanding of children's learning and development and were receiving support from an external lead practitioner with this. This was helping provide more meaningful play and learning experiences for children, as well as helping to identify children's next steps or additional support that was required.

Some staff were responsive to children through skilled observations, responding appropriately to enhance learning through skilful questioning, extending children's thinking and learning. Staff should continue to develop their skills and confidence in extending children's learning through meaningful conversations. To further support staff's understanding of how children learn and develop, the management team should continue with planned training and development opportunities.

A mixture of spontaneous and planned experiences were provided to support children's learning through play. A free-flow approach to play meant children's play was not unnecessarily interrupted and they could make meaningful play choices, promoting child led play. However, children's play was interrupted to support the transition between key parts of the day. For example, welcome time and before lunchtime. We suggested the service reflects on current group times, in particular to consider the quality of experience and the length of time children were sitting, to ensure children's play is at the heart of their approach.

Since the previous inspection, new processes for planning and recording children's learning had been developed. The service should continue with this work, with a focus on open-ended play opportunities to support children's learning and development through a responsive approach.

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The setting was bright and welcoming, creating a pleasant environment for children and families. However, to maximise children's comfort and health, ventilation should be reviewed.

Since the previous inspection, improvements had been made to some playrooms and the three to five outdoor learning space.

Careful consideration had been given to the layout of the playrooms to offer spaces for children to make choices, support their interest and develop their ideas. There was plenty of space for children to play together or alone if they chose to do so and cosy spaces for children to rest and relax.

Most children could lead their own play. We observed children accessing resources independently and easily at their level. Resources were in good condition and age appropriate. However, to continue to support children's creativity and imaginative play, the 2-3 years indoor environment would benefit from further resources to support and stimulate children's natural curiosity, whilst also ensuring children were engaged in play.

We asked the management team to review the quantity and quality of toys and resources within this room. This would include adding more resources in the home corner, book corner and further open-ended and loose parts within the playroom to stimulate creativity and imagination. This would ensure a more enabling environment to promote independence and choice. (See Area for Improvement 1).

Health and wellbeing was promoted through outdoor play experiences. Outdoor areas could be accessed in all weather conditions. However, consideration should be given to ensure suitable shade for children in extreme weather conditions within the birth to three garden.

The garden for older children provided a range of spaces for the development of physical skills and exploration. Opportunities for risky play were provided with children assessing their own risks. For example, using bread baskets to balance on, climb up and jump from. Children made good use of this and were confident when using all areas of the outdoor space.

Further consideration should be given to the 0-3 garden to ensure a safe and stimulating outdoor play space. We found this play space to have limited resources and opportunities to support children's play and learning. The space and resources outdoors should now be developed to provide a wider range of engaging play experiences. (See Area for Improvement 1)

Children benefitted from a safe and secure setting with a range of safety measures in place to ensure children didn't come to harm. This included secure entry systems, clear boundary fencing, secure gates as well as regular headcounts and communication between staff.

Since the previous inspection staff had completed risk assessment training ensuring they could identify and minimise risks to ensure children's safety. Visual checks took place each day to help ensure the environment was safe for children, ensuring all hazards were identified and measures taken to mitigate risk. We noted on the day of inspection some areas within the garden that posed a potential risk and asked the service to address these.

Infection control practices minimised the potential spread of infection, supporting a safe environment for children. The nursery was clean and handwashing took place regularly. Nappy changing areas were clean, with personal protective equipment (PPE) being stored appropriately. All nappies and resources were stored hygienically.

Since the previous inspection work had been implemented to improve infection prevention control within the setting, ensuring hand washing sinks were accessible to children and staff in all playrooms. The service had also completed repairs to the changing room doors to ensure children's privacy and dignity was respected at all times.

Children and families privacy was protected as information was stored securely in the setting, with appropriate permissions gathered in relation to storing and sharing personal information.

Areas for improvement

1. To support positive outcomes and improve all the children's play experiences management and staff should:

- a) Provide children with more opportunities through free play, open ended materials and loose parts play, to promote their curiosity and imagination, their sense of wellbeing, wonder and adventure.
- b) Ensure that resources and layouts provoke children's interest and extend their thoughts and learning.
- c) Continue to review and evaluate children's play spaces both indoors and outside with full consideration being given to the experiences for the younger children.
- d) Staff should regularly evaluate outdoor spaces to ensure they are filled with open-ended opportunities for example, loose parts materials, sand, water, clay, creative tools and imaginative props for children to explore, inquire and engage in energetic play

This is to ensure care, play and learning is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity.' (HSCS 2.27); and 'As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment.' (HSCS 1.32).

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

A more settled, secure staff team was in place with a stable management structure to ensure staff felt supported in their day-to-day roles. Staff told us they felt supported by the management team and could go to the manager at anytime with any questions. One staff member told us, "our current manager has ensured that all staff feel comfortable to be able to approach her with any questions or concerns. She ensures that all staff feel valued and listened to at all times."

Since the previous inspection the new manager had improved outcomes for children and their families. Both the manager and staff had welcomed feedback and used this to develop the service's approach to deliver improved outcomes for children. One parent told us "the manager has done a great job in leading the nursery."

Revisiting the vision and values of the service would be beneficial for the staff team. It would allow staff, parents and children to gain a common understanding, purpose and commitment to their service, creating a shared vision. It would also support the manager to identify any training needs to empower staff in their care and support of children.

An improvement plan was in place which identified some key areas the service wished to improve, with a particular focus being placed on quality interactions. We agreed this was important to scaffold and extend children's play and learning. We encouraged the service to continue with this and ensure that all staff were able to reflect on, and contribute to the service's improvement journey.

The service had taken positive actions to improve communications and parental involvement. This included parents being welcomed back into the nursery setting, the use of family app to share information and 'monthly challenges' set by the manager to encourage parental engagement. Parents told us the management was approachable and they could raise any concerns with the management team. Effective communication, sharing information and meaningful parent involvement keeps parent involved and ensures the service meets their expectations.

Parents' views had been sought through questionnaires. They had recently attended stay and play sessions within the nursery which were very popular. This helped to promote connections and foster positive relationships for children and their families. The service should continue to develop systems to collect information from parents, more regularly on relevant aspects of the nursery life. Consideration should also be given to how children's views are collected to inform and shape the planning as well as the delivery of the service.

Regular auditing and monitoring took place across a range of areas, helping to support and develop staff practice. Accidents and incidents were clearly recorded with monthly reviews, helping to inform risk assessments and adaptations to keep children safe.

Consideration should be given to how the provider and manager could support staff to develop their practice through observations of practice. This would act as a catalyst for improvements in staff skills, knowledge and understanding.

To ensure continued improved outcomes for children and families the service should make use of the best practice document guidance such as "A quality framework for day-care of children, childminding and school aged children", "Growing my potential" and "Play Pedagogy Toolkit."

Whilst also continuing to develop quality assurance to ensure robust monitoring and evaluation of practice, to ensure high quality learning experiences for children and families.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

4.3 Staff deployment

The staff team were enthusiastic and committed to the role they played caring for children. The majority of interactions with children were characterised by warmth, kindness and compassion.

Staff were respectful of children, asking about nappy changes, promoting nurture and respecting children's rights. Parents described the staff as "always friendly and approachable."

Staff were appropriately deployed within the setting, ensuring a mixture of differing experienced staff worked together. This providing opportunities for good role models and mentoring of less experienced staff to ensure positive experiences for children. The management team were also visible and played a key role in promoting good practice.

The staffing model in place meant that staff mostly worked within the same room, ensuring children were familiar with staff and supported continuity of care. The keyworker system meant that staff were able to build relationships with parents and children, which also enhanced positive relationships and continuity of care.

Parents knew who was caring for their child. Changes to staff were communicated through newsletters and the 'Family app.' New staff were introduced to children and parents on their first day of employment, helping to build relationships.

We asked the management to consider how staff were deployed to support children's play preferences, whilst also providing opportunities for high quality engagement and interactions. There were occasions when children could not choose whether to play indoors or outdoors, which contributed to some missed opportunities to support and extend children's learning.

Staff had been safely recruited and were suitable registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), the professional body overseeing registration of childcare staff. The induction process had been developed since the previous inspection to include more opportunities for reflection and monitoring of practice during the initial stages of staff's employment. The service made good use of the National Induction Resources (NIR) and mentoring approaches which supported new members of staff to gain knowledge, experience and skills to meet children's needs.

Staff communicated regularly throughout the session with each other, which helped ensure children could be supervised and information was shared to ensure children's needs were being met in general.

Staff told us they felt supported by the leadership team. Management were providing additional support to help staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities, with all staff describing a supportive atmosphere helping them to work well as a team. Regular communication enabled staff to feel included and valued towards the development of the service.

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 ensure children's safety and wellbeing, staff should ensure they follow risk assessments. Staff should identify risks as they arise and take action to address these.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state, 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.' (HSCS 3.14) and 'My environment is secure and safe.' (HSCS 5.19).

This area for improvement was made on 26 August 2022.

Action taken since then

All staff had completed risk assessments training to ensure they were fully informed of risks and could identify and respond appropriately when risks were identified.

All staff were fully aware of risk assessments and were following protocol at all times.

Therefore this area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To reduce the risk of infection being transmitted, suitable handwashing facilities should be available to staff and children at all times. Toilet and nappy changing area doors should be kept fully closed.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state, 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment.' (HSCS 5.24).

This area for improvement was made on 26 August 2022.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection the service had ensured handwashing sinks are available in all playrooms.

Appropriate sinks had been identified for handwashing only, minimising the risk of infection. All appropriate handwashing resources were easily accessible for staff and children.

The toilet and nappy changing door had been repaired since the last inspection and was closed at all times.

Therefore this area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The provider should implement a staffing model that supports staff to provide high quality interactions to children while also following children's play preferences.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social care Standards, which state, 'My needs are met by the right number of people.' (HSCS 3.15) and 'People have time to support and care for me and to speak with me.' (HSCS 3.16)

This area for improvement was made on 26 August 2022.

Action taken since then

The service had sufficient staff to meet the needs of children. Staff were deployed effectively to ensure children's play was supported.

Since the previous inspection some training had been delivered to support staff's interactions. The service should continue to support quality engagements through further training to ensure staff can scaffold children's learning. This has been reflected within 1.3 Play and learning section of this report.

This area for improvement has been met.

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	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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