

Thrive Childcare and Education Happitots Cumbernauld Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 February 2024

Service provided by:
Thrive Childcare and Education
Limited

Service provider number:
SP2003002955

Service no:
CS2003055749

About the service

Thrive Childcare and Education Happitots Cumbernauld provides a care service to a maximum of 87 children as follows : no more than 15 children aged under two years; no more than 23 children aged two years to under three years; 49 children aged three years to those not yet attending primary school full time. The service is located in premises on the third floor of the main shopping mall in Cumbernauld Town Centre. Accommodation consists of a large open play space which has been divided into three separate play areas, toilets, kitchen, office space and an outdoor balcony playspace. The service provider is Thrive Childcare and Education and operates in partnership with North Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership to provide early learning and childcare for children aged three to five years. The service is close to shops, transport routes and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 14 February 2024. 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 throughout the inspection year. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with 18 of the children using the service and reviewed survey responses from 16 parents whose children attend the service.
- Spoke with the manager and seven staff and reviewed survey responses from nine members of staff.
- Observed practice and staff interactions with children.
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced sensitive and respectful caregiving from staff who were responsive to children's changeable interests.
- Children were spoken and listened to in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included.
- We found the balance of experienced staff and limited staffing turnover contributed to continuity in children's care.
- Staff were motivated, well led and passionate about improving outcomes for all children.
- Staff communicated well together and supported each other in their shared work roles.
- We found that staff worked hard to provide a variety of quality learning experiences by continuously promoting choice, children's interests, as well as tracking and reflecting on individual achievements.
- Staff should develop their approaches to supporting children's collaborative play projects and promoting child led planning for play.
- We identified a need for staff to review daily routines and deployment of staff to increase available time and opportunities for young children to experience outdoor play every day.

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?	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 made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator as we found performance where identified strengths had a significant positive impact on children's experiences and outcomes.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as very good as we found performance demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require any significant adjustment.

We looked at how the nursery's planning approaches for children's care, learning and development ensured they experienced positive outcomes. Detailed and regularly reviewed personal planning systems were in place for all children. Staff made effective use of national guidance on personal planning documentation, including Realising the ambition and Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). Children's personal planning records included: background information; photo based learning journal observations with links to SHANARRI wellbeing indicators; parental review sheets; records of children's achievements. Staff used this personal planning information to involve families in decisions about their child's care and development. This helped to promote parental awareness of actions that were being used in practice to help individual children achieve their learning goals. We noted that effective systems were in place to support children with additional support needs. This included positive examples of multi agency involvement serving to maximise potential outcomes for children's learning and development. The planning systems we found in place enabled the relevant staff to respond quickly, sensitively and compassionately to changes in a child's life.

Throughout the various play sessions we observed it was clear that children experienced sensitive and respectful caregiving. The balance of experienced staff and limited staffing turnover contributed to continuity in children's care. We observed staff being responsive to children's changeable interests and demands. Children were spoken and listened to in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included. All of the parents who completed our survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "Overall, I am happy with care and support my child receives in the setting". One parent told us: "The nursery as a whole is very child centred. Children are at the heart of every decision the staff make in all areas of the nursery. My child had thrived so much since starting here. Staff go over and above to meet the needs of children in their care." Another parent commented: "The service is professional, safe, caring and nurturing in all aspects. My child is greeted warmly every day by any staff he comes in contact with and had formed a strong bond with many of the staff in his room. Staff are cheerful, professional and happy to discuss anything at anytime." Staff used the information in children's personal plans to meet the needs of children requiring additional levels of support. A parent commented: "The staff in the preschool room have been incredibly supportive of our child, especially through toilet training and his sudden refusal to try food. I know that they back up our approach at home and the consistency has been helpful."

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

We found that staff worked hard to provide a variety of quality learning experiences by continuously promoting choice, children's interests, as well as reflecting on individual achievements. Staff took time to extend conversations with children about their play and used some well-timed open ended questioning to further extend and challenge thinking and learning. We found that staff used observations of children's significant play interests to adapt their support for and resourcing of play experiences.

Through discussion, it was evident that experienced staff had a shared understanding of child development and early years pedagogy and used this to scaffold and shape the breadth and depth of children's learning. We highlighted the value of staff continuing to develop their skills in identifying the significant learning of each child as they observe them at play. This will ensure that they are consistently able to identify what each child needs to learn next. In particular, we identified a need to ensure the next steps for children's play and learning within individual learning journal observations were specific to each child's specific learning needs. This can enhance the systems in place for highlighting the developmental progress children are making through planned play and learning experiences.

In each indoor and outdoor play space there were some well considered open ended materials and creative approaches that at times engaged children's imagination and enriched their play and learning. The introduction of regular visits to a woodland space to promote forest kindergarten play provided opportunities for children to engage with nature and experience more challenging outdoor play. The use of questions from staff helped children to extend their thinking and consolidate their thoughts and ideas through play. All the parents who completed our survey told us that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "My child has opportunities to be involved in meaningful, interesting and fun play experiences." One parent commented: "Learning is encouraged through play and comprehensive updates are provided on the parent app of what our child did and how that supported his learning. We were asked what we wanted our child to be doing and have seen evidence that it has been encouraged." Another parent told us: "We love the 1000 hours outdoor initiative. Our child regularly goes on long walks to the woods which he absolutely loves and gets a lot out of. Aside from that, the garden is well utilised by all children. Our child also loves the regular trips to the library which has encouraged his love of stories and books." A third parent commented: "I can definitely see that my child has reached all his milestones for his age. His social skills have improved and he has developed good speech and language skills. This is all thanks to the staff in helping my child learn and develop."

We discussed with staff observation approaches that could help identify and evaluate play experiences that children found particularly engaging and challenging. We highlighted how this could help foster meaningful discussion between children and staff about play and development. We discussed with staff how this would enhance the systems already in place for recognising children's achievements as well as further promote children's sense of ownership and leadership of play. In particular, we identified a need for staff to take forward and implement strategies for developing children's sense of ownership of leading change related to their self chosen play projects. Staff agreed that more flexible use of big books or similar planning tools that were based on observations of children's most engaging and involving play experiences could strengthen existing opportunities for children to shape their play environments.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator as we found performance where identified strengths had a significant positive impact on children's experiences and outcomes.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

We looked at the nursery environment and resources within it in terms of how they were managed to support positive outcomes for children. Children were cared for in a welcoming, comfortable environment which was bright and well ventilated. We noted that the provider had invested in the resourcing of the service to ensure indoor and outdoor spaces were well furnished with space for children to participate in a variety of activities. The nursery play spaces included the provision of open-ended and natural resources. Spaces were set up in ways that were adaptable and had potential to encourage children's creativity.

All parents who completed our survey agreed or strongly agreed with the survey statements: "My child has access to a good range of quality toys and play materials" and "The setting is well furnished, comfortable and homely". One parent commented: "The environment is stimulating and welcoming. We regularly see staff setting up interesting activities for children. Equally, we are shown pictures of activities which the children devise themselves." Another parent told us: "A lovely wee setting where I know my child feels safe and secure with the staff and environment he is in." A third parent commented: "Outdoor space isn't great as it's quite small and shared with the toddler room with limited resources due to this. It is not ideal for rough weather conditions with its location but staff use experience to ensure children are stimulated and enjoy their outdoor experience. Staff also offer children lots of opportunities to use other spaces such as library and take them on outings." Staff told us the limited size of the outdoor rooftop play space restricted the number of children who could access it at the same time. The layout of the nursery building and related access arrangements from playrooms restricted opportunities for children to freely lead their own play between indoor and outdoor play spaces.

We found that children's access to the outdoors required to be monitored so children had more opportunities to be creative by linking their play ideas across different contexts. We identified a need for staff to review daily routines to increase available time and opportunities for young children to experience outdoor play every day. Staff told us how they made use of outdoor play and woodland spaces to encourage young children to explore the natural world, move their body in different ways and widen opportunities to learn through their sensory and physical experiences. We highlighted and staff agreed that more regular planned outdoor play opportunities within park and woodland spaces beyond the limitations of the nursery setting would extend existing opportunities for children to experience fresh air and enjoy challenging play. The senior management team agreed to make this a focus of future staff resourcing as well as improvement and professional development planning.

During the course of inspection the manager informed us that new pedal bins had been purchased to minimise potential cross infection risks arising from nappy disposal. Potential infection risks relating to toilet roll enclosures and cleaning of air vents were dealt with during the course of the inspection. In order to help reduce any potential for infection to children from current laundry and in particular drying arrangements within the service we asked the manager to review ventilation systems for and citing of tumble dryers. Advice from the local environmental health departments can be used to inform this process.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

We evaluated this quality indicator as very good as we found performance demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require any significant adjustment.

We found that staff were motivated, well led and passionate about improving outcomes for all children. Staff told us how the manager team provided a clear focus for their shared team work including setting out clear responsibilities and expectations. We found that the team worked together effectively to evaluate and reflect on their practice. They were keen to take forward current ideas, develop and implement best practice guidance. We found that team meetings took place regularly and staff had the opportunity to take part in one to one meetings with management. These provided an opportunity to discuss any improvement ideas and identify any related training needs. This resulted in children experiencing quality interactions and a broad range of stimulating play experiences centred around their emerging interests. More than half of the parents we surveyed and all staff told us that they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the setting. They told us that their ideas and suggestions were used to influence change.

One parent told us: "The management team are very friendly and their door is always open. If there has been a time I need to speak to management they are very good at dealing with things there and then. They are always happy to help with anything whether it be big or small." Another parent commented: "The management team have been fantastic at supporting our family". A third parent stated: "The manager is an asset to Happitots and it cannot be understated how capable and approachable she is."

We highlighted practical consultation strategies for widening the levels of parental engagement in the improvement planning process. The staff agreed these would help strengthen the capacity of service to deliver high quality care and support tailored towards children's and families' particular needs and choices. The manager told us how they dedicated time to analysing children's, staff and parents' contributions to any consultations and extracting the key messages or themes. This feedback had been used to support the development of an improvement plan that clearly set out the service priorities and targets for change.

We found the management team had a comprehensive understanding of the strengths of the service and what was needed for improvement. They fully appreciated the importance of using the views of children and families, as well as partners, to inform the future planning and development of the service. They confirmed to us during our feedback that staff team would reflect on the findings of the inspection to help shape future priorities and embed suggested improvement approaches within the nursery's future improvement planning.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

We evaluated this quality indicator as very good as we found performance demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require any significant adjustment.

Staff communicated very well together and supported each other in their shared work roles. This helped to contribute to a happy and welcoming atmosphere. A robust induction process supported newly appointed staff to meet children's needs. The induction programme helped new staff to settle into their role and become part of the staff team. As a result, they were clear about their roles and responsibilities which supported children's experiences. Staff told us they had regular daily discussions about how best to meet children's individual needs, ensuring that they felt included and cared for. Children who required additional support were well supported by staff to feel respected and included in daily experiences. One parent commented: "Staff have been amazing with my child from day one - particularly looking after his needs with food allergies." Another parent told us: "The staff are great, my son is always well looked after. He took a while to settle and the staff always made sure he was welcomed and did everything they could to settle him quickly."

The staff routinely engaged in a range of professional learning activities that built on and sustained their practice. We found staff were confident in discussing how they had improved their practice as a result of their own professional learning activities. We found that this learning had a positive impact on the quality of experiences for children, their progress and wider improvements in the setting. We discussed the potential value to outcomes for children of implementing current staff training plans in forest kindergarten approaches as well as extending professional learning and development opportunities in child led planning and observation approaches. We identified a need to review staff deployment arrangements across each play space to ensure that at least one member of staff is available to support children's outdoor play at all times. Overall these strategies can increase the opportunities for children to be challenged and engaged across the range of available play opportunities and experiences.

They have potential to widen opportunities for staff to become confident in progressing new developments and enhance positive outcomes by increasing the range of approaches available to meet children's individual needs.

We observed staffing arrangements at children's meal times and found these generally contributed to calm, relaxed and positive experiences for children. We identified potential adaptations to staff deployment arrangements during lunchtime routines for children which would extend existing opportunities for key workers to sit with children and engage in meaningful uninterrupted personalised conversations about their daily experiences and strengthen existing relationships. The staff we spoke with agreed that these changes would support the nursery's commitment to providing a relaxed and nurturing environment for children during lunchtimes. It will increase opportunities for staff to be responsive to individual needs and support children to develop positive attachments with key adults. We signposted the manager to our practice note "Keeping children safe: supporting positive mealtime experiences in early learning and childcare (ELC)" to support continued professional reflection on mealtime improvements within the staff team.

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

The manager and staff should review the resources and opportunities to support children's daily access to outdoor play.

This is to ensure that the care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which states, that "As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment". (HSCS 1.32)

This area for improvement was made on 31 July 2019.

Action taken since then

Staff had undertaken training in outdoor learning and visited other nurseries to further support the development of their outdoor based learning approach. Management and staff in consultation with children and parents had created a plan to further develop the outdoor area to encourage more loose parts play and create a more enabling environment for children. The provider had invested in wooden decking and resources to enhance the suitability of the secure outdoor rooftop space. Staff had created more opportunities for children to engage in forest play experiences within a local woodland area as well as walks within the local community.

Previous area for improvement 2

The manager should review the staff development programme to ensure this provides opportunities for staff to extend their knowledge and understanding of Care Inspectorate national guidance publications including: "My World Outdoors"; "Food Matters - Nurturing, happy healthy children"; "Health and Social Care Standards - My support, my life".

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

This area for improvement was made on 31 July 2019.

Action taken since then

An annual staff training plan had been created and implemented to ensure all outdoor play and "Food Matters" guidance was embedded and implemented in staff practice. Training was delivered in a variety of guidance workshops at staff meetings, training events and the development of staff leadership roles. The senior management team used relevant national guidance to monitor and evaluate staff practice.

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?	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

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