

# Pinocchio's @ Heriot Watt Day Care of Children

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Edinburgh  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
23 January 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Pinocchio's Children's Nursery Ltd

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002984

**Service no:**  
CS2003046419

## About the service

To provide a care service to a maximum of 79 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. No more than 20 are aged under 2 years

The service may be provided as follows: a maximum of 55 children may be cared for in the main nursery building. A maximum of 24 children aged between 3 years and primary school entry may be cared for from the woodlands classroom.

The nursery is located in the grounds of Heriot Watt University at Riccarton Campus, Edinburgh. The nursery operates from self-contained accommodation comprising of five playrooms, a sleep room, kitchen, office, staffroom, nappy changing and toilet facilities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 18 January 2024 between 09:30 and 16:30. Three inspectors carried out the inspection.

To prepare for the inspection, we reviewed information about the service. This included registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

To inform our evaluation of the service we:

- observed practice and daily life
- spoke with children using the service
- gathered the views of parents
- reviewed documents
- spoke with the provider, manager and staff.

## Key messages

- Parents commented positively about all aspects of the nursery and were complimentary about staff and changes to the management team.
- Procedures around medication should be reviewed to ensure it is followed.
- There had been changes to the staff team and this was beginning to impact positively on outcomes for children.
- The outdoor classroom premises should be reviewed to ensure that cosy, warm spaces are provided for children to rest or play.
- Lunch time routines should be further developed to ensure they are supportive of children's needs, wishes and choices and support independence

## 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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How good is our care, play and learning?

## 3 - Adequate

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

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support.

Children experienced warm and nurturing approaches which supported their overall wellbeing. Most staff had an understanding about nurture and they offered reassurance and cuddles when children were upset. As a result, most children were happy and settled in the service. However, we observed some instances where staff practice could better reflect the nurture principles and we have asked the manager to review how children are supported to build relationships and attachments.

Staff were confident when discussing each child's care and support needs and all children had a personal plan. However, written information did not always reflect staff's knowledge. This included a lack of evidence surrounding strategies to support children, parental discussion and transitions between rooms. For example, staff had written that a strategy to support a child settling into the nursery was not to talk about their families and for drop off's to be as quick as possible. This showed the lack of understanding from staff about the nurture principles and the need for a clear strategy to support this individual child. For children with identified additional support needs there was evidence of meeting with other agencies and the impact this was having on the children. The manager should now ensure that personal plans are regularly reviewed and updated with the most current targets, support strategies and next steps. Parents commented "staff are so nurturing and my child has made strong bonds with them. They are warm, caring and really child centred". and "Everyone in my son's room is lovely, friendly and warm. It's clear they know my child and have a strong relationship with him".

The management of medication was inconsistent. Permission and administration paperwork was not always easy to follow and in some instances did not contain all relevant information. Some medication was not stored appropriately. This risked medication not being administered correctly. The manager should ensure that guidelines and procedures are followed when carrying out quality assurance on medication. In addition, if quality assurance responsibilities are delegated, appropriate training and support should be given to staff. (See requirement 1)

Some children received a positive mealtime experience and were well supported by staff; however, this was not consistent throughout the setting. Some staff were disorganised and became too task orientated meaning children did not experience a nurturing experience. Snack times could be used to support independence, choice and develop life skills such as pouring, spreading and cutting. The lunch time routine should be reviewed to develop a relaxing and calm experience along with opportunities to promote self help skills, independence and wellbeing (see area for improvement 1)

Children who were in the outdoor classroom area enjoyed and benefited from exploring their natural environment. Children were all wearing appropriate outdoor gear but due to the weather being very icy, some children were visibly cold. Staff should understand and follow the procedures that are in place to ensure children are warm and comfortable. This included ensuring children were wearing welly warmers, providing hot milk and lighting a fire.

### 1.3 Play and learning

Most children were relaxed, having fun and engaged in their play, children had a sense of belonging in the setting. Some staff joined in with children's play helping them extend their thoughts and ideas.

Some staff used their knowledge and skills to support play and learning experiences. Planning approaches were mostly responsive to children and staff planned activities around children's interests and specific events throughout the year. These were recorded through floor books, displays, planning sheets and children's individual observations. Staff should be aware of the planning in each room this would ensure children receive play opportunities that relevant to their interests. A parent commented "I think the play and learning is excellent and the teacher respond and tailor activities based on kids interests".

Children's progress and next steps were tracked and priorities for learning were in place. However, staff need further guidance around how to evidence children's individual development. This would ensure children are fully supported and challenged. Management had identified the need for this improvement as part of the service's own self-evaluation and quality assurance. Parents commented "The regular observations are lovely, it's so nice to see what the children are doing. The activities they do seem to be fun, engaging, educational and things we wouldn't always do at home. It's helpful to show what has been done so we can choose to continue the activity or to be able to talk about it at home. My child is usually holding a toy at pick up and is excited to show me around the room, he clearly loves the setting" and "I have felt much more connected to what is going on each day but also a great sense of forward planning and how daily activities are built on previous, and connected to learning themes / objectives".

Children were adequately challenged and stimulated in their play and learning. To further enhance this the service should review the provision of continuous play opportunities throughout the playrooms. This should include provocations of play to spark curiosity and imagination which would support children to be meaningfully involved in their learning.

Staff supported some children with praise and encouragement which helped create a supportive and caring environment. Most children were confident moving round their playrooms. To support children's play and learning staff should continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of child development, relevant theory and practice. They should build on their experience and expertise to fully meet children's needs through high quality interactions. Staff should use best practice guidance, such as, 'Realising the Ambition' and 'Growing my Potential' to evaluate children's experiences, environments and interactions.

## Requirements

1.  
By March 15 2024, the provider must ensure that children receive care and support that meets their needs. To achieve this, the provider must, as a minimum  
Complete an audit of medication to ensure that the medication procedures were being consistently followed.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 5 of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

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

## Areas for improvement

1.

To support children's wellbeing, independence and opportunities for social interactions the manager should ensure that mealtimes are developed in line with current best practice.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I can enjoy unhurried meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible' (HSCS 1.35) and 'If I need help with eating and drinking, this is carried out in a dignified way and my personal preferences respected' (HSCS 1.34)

## How good is our setting?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact on outcomes for children, key areas needed to improve.

#### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The service was welcoming, bright and well ventilated. There was a secure entry system in place which was monitored by staff. A parent commented "clean and tidy setting with plenty of resources for the children". We have asked the service to monitor the use of flashing lights in playrooms as this can over stimulate children.

The indoor and outdoor play spaces included the provision of open-ended and natural resources that encouraged children to be imaginative and curious about their world. Spaces were set up in ways that were adaptable and had potential to encourage children's creativity. We found that the presentation and resourcing of play spaces for children's engagement needed to be developed further. There was reference to schematic play and some opportunities for this to be supported. However, this needs to be further developed through upskilling staff's knowledge and understanding of sustained play opportunities. Parents commented "my child does a split placement between woodlands and the early learning room and I think this provides a really unique experience. The woodland setting has exceeded our expectations - what an amazing space" and "the introduction of woodlands nursery has been amazing".

To enhance the children's sense of comfort, nurture and security, the service should consider developing the home areas to ensure they are well resourced and a comfortable space. As already mentioned under quality indicator play and learning attention should also be paid to the outdoor classroom to ensure children have access to resources that allow them to keep warm on colder days (see area for improvement 1)

Infection prevention and control measures should be reviewed across the setting. Some staff were not washing their hands often enough and were instead relying on wearing gloves. Some children were lifted up to access the sink although steps were available. Children in the outdoor classroom washed their hands but could not use the foot operated pedal bin. We also found improvements were required within the nappy changing area, to help minimise the potential spread of infection. For example, the removal of the washing machine and the addition of a another changing unit. The service have agreed to submit an action plan informing us how they will address the concerns raised (see area for improvement 2)

## Areas for improvement

1. To further support children's interests, development and learning, the manager and staff should continue to develop the environment and play spaces. Staff should evaluate the spaces to ensure the resources on offer provide opportunities that spark curiosity and reflect children's current interests. This will ensure children engage in more purposeful play and learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state 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 for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity.' (HSCS 2.27)

2. To ensure children receive care in a safe environment, infection control procedures should be improved. Procedures for handwashing should be reviewed. The issues highlighted with the changing area should be addressed and an action plan submitted to the Care Inspectorate informing us of the timescales for these improvements to be carried out.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.22).

## How good is our leadership?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact on outcomes for children, key areas needed to improve.

#### 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The manager engaged well during the inspection process, taking on advice and support, demonstrating a commitment for improvement. We acknowledged that there had been management and staffing challenges over the past few months. The manager was open and honest in relation to the challenges the service had faced and the improvements that were required. This had been clearly communicated with parents and one commented "I was impressed at how the management team responded to parent concerns. They arranged a meeting and were flexible with delivery method (in person and online) and timings to allow space for all voices to be heard. They didn't take the easy option (eg email) and were open to hear all views and have difficult conversations. They took on board parent views and I have seen outcomes actioned and maintained following this. This experience filled me with confidence that this care setting is one where I can communicate my views, and know I will be listened to".

All staff demonstrated a commitment to the service and told us they felt supported by the manager who had an 'open door policy' and they felt their views were valued. Parents have all commented positively about the change in the management team. Comments included "Over the past year I have felt that management has been more present and I feel confident in contacting them if required. My child knows management and always pops her head into the office to say goodbye" and "Since a parents meeting last year, leadership has been outstanding. There has been a clear shift with much clearer 'leadership' from management in all rooms. There are regular updates coming out, and the leadership team is consistent in how they communicate. All in all the nursery feels a happy place to be for staff and children".

An improvement plan was in place for the service. However, this was in the early stages of being implemented and due to staff sickness and recruitment there was limited impact in terms of outcomes for children. Priorities had been discussed at team meetings; however, it was not always clear from meeting minutes if staff understood the priorities and how to drive improvements forward. The manager should continue to develop a clear action plan detailing staff's responsibilities, this would ensure they are involved in a meaningful way and help to identify improvements.

Communication with parents was in place. Daily informal chats and an on-line communication tool was used to message and share information with parents. A recent informal parents' night enabled parents/ carers to spend time at the setting and get involved in their child's play and learning. Parents shared positive feedback with staff. Children are involved in influencing change in the pre-school room and we could see clearly that the planning cycle supported them to influence their daily experiences. Children commented "I like when I play on the monkey bars, I love \*\*\*\*\* (staff member), I love playing in the woodland" and "Playing with dolls, being in the nativity play, teachers telling us what we have to do, I love the teacher".

The service used some processes for self-evaluation. However, these processes were not yet robust enough to secure sustained improvement. Monitoring systems, including quality assurance, need to be embedded with a focus on, monitoring children's personal plans, children's experiences, monitoring of staff practice and developing their skills, knowledge and expertise. This should be used to evaluate and improve the nursery as a whole.

This will ensure that positive changes are sustained and will impact on the experiences for children (see area for improvement 1)

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure the quality of children's experiences are improved, the provider should implement robust quality assurance processes, including self-evaluation, covering key areas of practice. This should include, but not be limited to, monitoring children's personal plans, children's play and learning experiences, monitoring of staff practice, and evaluating and improving the nursery as a whole.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes'. (HSCS 4.19)

## How good is our staff team?

**3 - Adequate**

We evaluated this key question as adequate. While the strengths had a positive impact on outcomes for children, key areas needed to improve.

### 4.3 Staff deployment

Staff were engaged during the inspection process and were open and honest in their discussions with us. The staff team had experienced a significant period of change. This included changes to the management structure and staff teams. The focus of the newly formed team was to build relationships. A parent commented "I would like to acknowledge the difference I've seen in a matter of a few months. The nursery looks smarter, slicker, all rooms have a consistent theme and from what I've observed in the newsletter and updates, the game has certainly been raised across the board.



Staff appear united with a common goal to provide the best care for the children. There has been a lot of change recently but looking at the nursery and staff now, as a parent I am proud to send my child there".

Staff were working flexibly across the service on a rota system to ensure appropriate staffing levels throughout the day. At points across the day staff were task focused which impacted on children's outcomes and quality of learning experiences. The management team should continue to develop strategies to ensure that staff were deployed effectively to support continuity of care and high-quality outcomes for childcare and learning across the entire day. Parent comments included "friendly staff who clearly adore the children (evidenced by how happy my child is to see them)" and "I have been so pleased with the staff team in my child's rooms. They have built a really strong team in the past eight months and seem to provide a really consistent containing environment for my child".

Most staff were enthusiastic about providing high quality care for all the children and developing their practice. Although there was a lack of experienced staff but all were committed to working with children and enjoyed their role within the nursery. To ensure children receive appropriate care and support, staff should develop their understanding and skills around nurture, interactions and child development. Staff should also take part in child protection training to ensure their knowledge and understanding is refreshed.

Appraisals, wellbeing checks and staff meetings supported the staff team. The manager and room leads were monitoring staff's practice. However, given the areas of improvement raised in this report, this was having limited impact. The management team should focus on sharing their skills and expertise with staff to allow them to grow in confidence which would ensure they meet all children's needs.

## Complaints

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

## Detailed evaluations

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

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