

Arbor Green Nursery Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 May 2024

Service provided by:
Arbor Green Nursery Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2008010008

Service no:
CS2009194088

About the service

Arbor Green Nursery is registered to provide an early learning and childcare service to a maximum of 56 children aged three months to those not yet attending primary school. Arbor Green Nursery Ltd is the provider. The nursery is in receipt of funded placements from the City of Edinburgh Council for eligible children aged from three to five years. The service is located near the city centre of Edinburgh. There are two playrooms; one for babies from three months to two years and another for children aged two to five years. Both playrooms have access to an outdoor area. The service is next to local transport routes and near shops and schools.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 6 May 2024 between 09:00 and 17:30. We returned to complete the inspection on Tuesday 7 May 2024 from 09:00 to 16:45. Two inspectors carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included the last inspection report, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- received 23 responses from parents to our electronic request for feedback
- received 13 responses from staff to our electronic request for feedback
- spoke with and interacted with children
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents relating to children's care and learning and the management of the service.

We provided feedback to the service on Wednesday 8 May 2024. In attendance were the provider, the registered managers and a quality improvement education officer from the City of Edinburgh Council.

Key messages

Three legislative requirements from the previous inspection had been met as improvements had been made in relation to value based practice, children's personal plans and quality assurance systems.

Two areas for improvement made at the last inspection had been met because improvements had been made to the environment for children under two years and the quality of observations to document children's learning.

Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to support their overall wellbeing. This enabled children to develop secure attachments.

Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning. This empowered children to achieve developmental progress.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very 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?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to support their overall wellbeing. Staff acknowledged the importance of children's transitional objects, for example cuddly toys from home to help provide children with a sense of emotional security. This encouraged children to play with increasing confidence. Staff expressed genuine care towards children and empathised with their needs. For example, staff supported children to change their wet clothes following outdoor play. Staff used skilful interactions, including modelling and thinking aloud to empower children to engage in a way that respected children's pace, at the same time ensuring children's comfort and wellbeing. Parents' comments included; "The staff are incredibly warm and caring and create a safe and happy environment to allow the children to thrive".

Children and staff enjoyed eating together in an unhurried and relaxed atmosphere, ensuring a caring and positive social experience. Children were consulted with to help shape the menu. The chef interacted with children during mealtimes to ensure their nutritional needs and individual preferences were met. This meant that children were valued, and their health promoted. Children were well hydrated as drinks were available during mealtimes and play.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through effective use of personal planning. Staff used the wellbeing indicators to help identify children's individual needs and put in place tailored support strategies. This included working alongside agencies to consider the effectiveness of strategies and make relevant changes. This helped promote a culture of reflective practice to get it right for children. Regular reviews of children's personal plans were carried out and updates were shared amongst the staff team to help promote continuity in care. To help strengthen consistent practice amongst the staff team, we encouraged the service to make children's strategies more explicit by providing staff with examples of what these could look and sound like, in practice.

Children's medication was stored and managed well and reviewed regularly. Information was clearly documented and accessible, which meant children could have confidence that staff were well equipped to meet their health needs. Proactive measures were in place so staff could be quickly alerted to any change in a child's health to help promote early intervention and prevention. The service was receptive to our advice to review the summarised information documented to include additional information. For example, the stepped approach to take for children with dietary needs but who do not require medication. This would enhance the efficient systems already in place to promote children's health and wellbeing.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning. Some of the children had expressed an interest in a mermaid film. In response, staff facilitated opportunities for children to consolidate their learning and widen their skills. This included creating under the sea provocations (the display of resources to spark children's curiosity). This led to children developing their knowledge of sharks and adopting a real shark which they followed via an app.

Learning partnerships were created between home and nursery, as children took a cuddly toy shark home and documented their adventures in a floor book. In this way, staff skilfully empowered children to achieve developmental progress by providing a sense of challenge that kept children's interests at the heart. Staff positively enhanced children's enthusiasm and love for learning. Parents' comments included; "The staff are always kind and welcoming. There is a friendly buzz about the centre and the play opportunities for all the children are brilliant, diverse and enriching. My child is always excited to attend and talks about the wonderful experiences they have there".

There was a very good balance of spontaneous and planned high quality experiences that promoted children's choice and independence. Children were provided with the opportunity to plant and harvest vegetables. The children selected spring greens from the soil and cleaned them. Staff used skilful interactions to empower children to identify what could enhance the flavour. The children decided to add garlic. Staff and children collaborated further as they cooked the spring greens and then tasted them. These rich learning opportunities enabled children to develop a healthy relationship with food and develop their knowledge and understanding of sustainability. Older children proudly shared their role as 'eco warriors'. One child told us, "We need to look after the planet. We don't want pollution to go in the sea because of the animals". This helped children to be responsible citizens and develop strong values in empathy and compassion.

Staff had developed their skills to document high quality observations of children's learning. Observations demonstrated staff's knowledge of child development and attachment theory. The service used a flexible key worker system so changes could be made in response to children's needs. Staff had invested time in building secure attachments with children, for example by facilitating story telling with children's favourite books, which helped promote meaningful connections and replicated familiar experiences from home. This enabled children to feel confident to explore the learning environment independently and support their next stage of development. Children interacted more with their peers and engaged in purposeful play for sustained periods of time.

Staff actively listened with interest to children's experiences outside of nursery, for example family holidays. Observations showed how staff had extended children's thinking skills as they studied maps and learnt about different animals around the world and cultures. Children were supported by staff who expressed curiosity; staff took time to understand children's play and how they could enhance this through skilful questioning and the use of provocations. Moving forward, the service was committed to ensuring the significance of children's learning is clearly recorded within children's observations, making next steps more specific and carrying out more extensive evaluations of children's floor books. This will help further demonstrate how staff have applied their knowledge of child development, relevant theory and practice to enable children to progress well.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 2.2 Children experience high quality experiences

Investment in the physical presentation of the nursery promoted children's sense of worth. Planting areas and flower beds were well maintained and attractively displayed. The creative use of materials and comfortable furnishings indoors contributed towards a homely atmosphere.

Low level lighting further enhanced children's wellbeing.

The indoor and outdoor environments were sensitively structured and took account of all children's stages of development and learning. Core provision was available, for example painting and block play. This helped provide breadth and depth to children's learning across the curriculum and provided children with opportunities to revisit play experiences to build upon their knowledge and skills. Areas were well defined and resourced, promoting children's curiosity and creativity. Children were empowered to assess and manage risk as they used loose parts for climbing, balancing and sliding outdoors.

Spaces reflected children's current interests and curiosities, with appropriate resources and materials to support learning. Children had noticed worms while exploring the mud kitchen. Staff facilitated opportunities to develop children's skills, for example threading to create pretend worms and widening children's knowledge of minibeasts through the use of books and magnifying glasses. The children had noticed frogs. In response, staff facilitated an opportunity for children to create their own pond. Children learnt about life cycles as they predicted what would happen next to the tadpoles. To strengthen child centred planning systems, we suggested that the service documents how they have empowered children to lead their learning by consulting with children on what they know, what they would like to find out and how this has been acted upon.

Regular opportunities were provided for children to build strong connections with their community. Outings reflected children's stages of development and individual wishes. For example, some children had visited the museum as staff had observed children using a rotation schema and to extend their interest in dinosaurs. Robust risk assessments were in place for outings and demonstrated how staff had extensively considered various scenarios and ways to increase children's safety.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service had meaningfully consulted with children and families to review its vision, values and aims. Feedback had been acted upon, which helped children and families feel that their contributions were genuinely valued and promoted a sense of ownership of the nursery. Our inspection findings showed how the service's vision, values and aims translated into children's everyday experiences, for example learning to care for the environment as documented within quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning.

One of the nursery's aims was to enhance opportunities to engage with families. The service facilitated Friday workshops to extend learning opportunities for growing food into the home environment. This empowered families to become more sustainable and promote healthy eating habits. Parents' responses to a questionnaire the service had issued, indicated that parents would find it helpful to understand more about the purpose of children's personal plans. We advised the service to document the actual and desired outcomes of any improvements to help promote a culture of focusing on the impact on outcomes for children. The service was committed to increasing opportunities to engage parents in the life of the nursery to work more closely to support children to reach their full potential.

Leaders had created conditions where people felt confident to initiate well-informed change. Well-planned delegation of roles and responsibilities within the management team reflected staff's strengths and enabled increased opportunities for leaders to role model, mentor and coach staff. This meant that quality assurance systems were more purposeful as leaders were insightful of the connection between documentation and the impact on outcomes for children. Leadership roles were distributed amongst the team and reflected staff's passions. One staff member had taken an active role in increasing staff wellbeing. This benefited children in that we observed staff to express genuine affection, care and concern for children as noted within quality indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support.

Quality assurance systems were more robust and promoted a culture of continuous improvements. Self-evaluation tools, including PDSA (plan, do, study, act) cycles and SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analyses were used to promote critical reflection. A PDSA cycle for mealtimes helped demonstrate the improvement journey. Staff noticed that the position of the mealtime area for children aged two to five meant that there was lots of movement from people passing which caused disruption for children. Changes made included relocating the meal time area, improving the design to promote a relaxed atmosphere and increasing children's independence. Children were familiar with the mealtime routine, for example independently washing their hands, selecting their dishes and choosing where to sit in preparation for eating. Moving forward, we advised how quality assurance tasks could be delegated to staff, with management oversight. This will help ensure improvements are embedded and sustained and enable the management team to promote innovative practice.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 4.3 Staff deployment

The importance of ensuring that the service is appropriately staffed during the day was recognised by leaders as essential to the wellbeing of children in the service. This included using regular agency staff to enable staff to have protected time to undertake training opportunities and reflect on their practice. Staff told us about how they had developed their knowledge and skills to support children to regulate their emotions. Staff were flexibly deployed so they could respond to children's individual needs and preferences. For example, some children wanted to explore the planting area and some children preferred to play in the caravan with staff to explore their interest in oceans. The management team assisted at busier times of the day, for example during lunch time to help ensure that the quality of children's experiences was maintained while staff took breaks. This all positively impacted on children and staff wellbeing as they were given time and space to attend to their needs.

Effective teamwork was observed amongst staff. Staff used their initiative and calmly communicated their movements with each other in a way that caused minimum disruption to children's play. This not only modelled positive interactions for children but demonstrated that staff respected children's own play agenda.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 01 December 2023, the provider must ensure that all children are recognised as individuals and treated with dignity and respect.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) ensure that children are appropriately comforted and their feelings acknowledged
- b) ensure that staff develop their understanding of their role and responsibility of upholding children's rights
- c) ensure that staff practice is underpinned by the principles of the Health and Social Care Standards.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a)(b) (Welfare of Users) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience people speaking and listening to me in a way that is courteous and respectful, with my care and support being the main focus of people's attention' (HSCS 3.1). 'I experience warmth, kindness and compassion in how I am supported and cared for, including physical comfort when appropriate for me and the person supporting and caring for me' (HSCS 3.9).

This requirement was made on 17 August 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to support their overall wellbeing.

Staff expressed genuine care towards children and empathised with their needs.

Staff had undertaken training and had reflected on how this had impacted on their practice to improve outcomes for children.

Quality assurance systems promoted children's rights and the Health and Social Care Standards.

This requirement has been met.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 2

By 01 December 2023, the provider must ensure that children's individual needs are met through effective recording of information in personal plans.

To do this the provider must, at a minimum, ensure:

- a) that there is a system in place to share information gathered from parents with the child's key worker and that this information is accessible to all staff
- b) that information about children is updated with parents every six months or sooner if there is a change
- c) that information about children's allergies and medical needs are updated, with appropriate information so that staff can meet their needs.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a)(b) (Welfare of Users) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

This requirement was made on 17 August 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through effective use of personal planning.

Regular reviews of children's personal plans were carried out and updates were shared amongst the staff team to help promote continuity in care.

Children's medication was stored and managed well and reviewed regularly. Information was clearly documented and accessible which meant that children could have confidence that staff were well equipped to meet their health needs.

This requirement has been met.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 3

By 01 December 2023, to improve outcomes for children, the provider must ensure that they have developed and implemented an effective system of quality assurance to monitor and improve all areas of practice.

This must include ongoing self-evaluation that leads to continuous improvement.

This is to comply with the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011/210 - Regulation 3 Principles and Regulation 15 (a) and (b) Staffing.

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

This requirement was made on 17 August 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Quality assurance systems were more robust and promoted a culture of continuous improvements. Self-evaluation tools, including PDSA cycles and SWOT analyses were used to promote critical reflection and improve outcomes for children.

This requirement has been met.

Met - within timescales

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 support children's learning and development, the provider should ensure that the environment in the under twos room is well resourced. This would allow children to lead their own learning and revisit areas to support their overall development and learning. Activities and resources should be planned to inspire curiosity, awe and wonder in children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling' (HSCS 1.31).

This area for improvement was made on 17 August 2023.

Action taken since then

Environmental audits had been undertaken. Areas were well defined and resourced, reflecting children's stage of development and interests. Children engaged in purposeful play of their choosing and adults skilfully extended this.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's learning, the provider should ensure that regular observations of children are written in a meaningful manner and then used by staff to plan individual learning opportunities.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

This area for improvement was made on 17 August 2023.

Action taken since then

Staff had developed their skills to document high quality observations of children's learning.

Observations demonstrated staff's knowledge of child development and attachment theory.

Children were supported by staff who expressed curiosity; staff took time to understand children's play and how they could enhance this through skilful questioning and the use of provocations.

This area for improvement has been met.

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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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