

Cherry Tree (AMT) Ltd Day Care of Children

East Beancross Farm
Polmont
Falkirk
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Telephone: 01324 716 900

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 May 2024

Service provided by:
Cherry Tree (AMT) Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2017012927

Service no:
CS2017356526

About the service

Cherry Tree (AMT) Ltd is a daycare of children service situated in the Falkirk area close to green spaces and local amenities. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 42 children from birth to those not yet attending primary school.

The service has five playrooms to accommodate the various age groups of children. A large, enclosed garden offers daily opportunities for energetic active play. In addition to the playrooms there are toilets, a staff room and office facilities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 May 2024 between 08:30 and 17:35 and 8 May 2024 between 08:30 and 16:40. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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
- received feedback from 13 families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Quality assurance processes had been developed and were having a positive impact on improving outcomes for children.
- Children experienced warm, kind and caring interactions. They had built up positive relationships with staff.
- Children had fun and particularly enjoyed playing outside which supported their learning and development. They experienced uninterrupted play which enabled them to become focused and engaged in their play experiences.
- Play spaces across the nursery did not consistently offer a rich and exciting range of resources and materials to effectively challenge children.
- The arrangements for monitoring, maintenance and repair of the setting and equipment were not sufficient to ensure actions were taken without delay.
- Staff worked well together to ensure that they were available to support children in areas across the nursery.

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.

Quality Indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, kind and caring interactions. They had built up positive relationships with staff and as a result, were confident to seek out support and reassurance. Families commented very positively on the care their children experienced. Their comments included: "The staff are welcoming, helpful and amazing people. The children love their key workers and get excited to spend the day with them", "Staff are warm and caring, towards both my child and myself" and "Staff are welcoming, make time to chat and get to know you. They are always happy and on hand to provide support".

Families were welcomed into the service to drop off and collect their children, which contributed to creating positive relationships. This enabled information to be shared between nursery and home which promoted continuity of care.

Staff knew children well and used the information in their personal plans to meet their needs. Older children were involved in identifying what mattered to them and staff used this to inform their care, play and learning experiences. Whilst not all babies had detailed information recorded in their personal plans about their care routines, they were supported by nurturing staff who were in tune to their individual needs and cues. This meant they experienced responsive care which was right for them. We suggested updating the personal plans to ensure that babies experienced consistency of care in the event of staff absence.

Children were nurtured and supported through their daily experiences. They experienced sensitive, kind, and gentle interactions such as chatting during personal care. Their needs were met in a dignified and respectful manner. Staff were responsive to younger children's individual sleep routines and preferences. For example, staff offered physical comfort to help them settle. This supported children's emotional security and wellbeing.

Children experienced positive, sociable mealtimes as they sat with their friends, chatting, and eating together. Older children's choice was promoted as they chose when to eat. They were effectively supported to develop independence, for example, self-serving. This helped to build their confidence and life skills. Babies experienced warm interactions, including when receiving support with feeding. They were enabled to eat at a pace which was right for them. As a result, they experienced an unhurried and relaxed atmosphere. Children would benefit from staff sitting and eating with them to promote good eating habits.

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children had fun and particularly enjoyed playing outside which supported their learning and development. They independently chose where they played and moved confidently between the indoor and outdoor play spaces. They experienced uninterrupted play which enabled them to become focused and engaged in their play experiences.

Planning approaches supported children's play and learning. These were in the early stages of change for older children and enabled a good balance of planned and spontaneous experiences. The recent changes had a positive impact on extending children's play and learning experiences. Children in the younger rooms were supported by flexible and responsive planning. For example, staff followed children's interests in animals and visited a farm. This helped children to make connections to their local community. There was scope for planning for younger children to be developed to include schematic play to enhance their experiences.

Children enjoyed playing independently, cooperatively with friends and engaging staff in their play experiences. Some staff supported children's learning through commentary and effective questioning. However, there were a few missed opportunities to respond to children's invitations to play and extend their learning. Children were supported to develop skills in language, literacy, and numeracy. For example, through the repetition of words, singing, mark making and reading stories. Some staff used mathematical language within play to develop children's numeracy skills.

Observations were mostly of good quality and identified children's individual learning and progress. However, next steps were vast and not always followed up to demonstrate children's achievements. Families told us they felt informed about their child's development. Their comments included, "Easy access to information about my child via the app, frequent updates about what they are doing throughout the day" and "The parent evenings are really good for getting into their learning and development in detail".

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

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

Quality Indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

Children and families experienced a bright, welcoming and secure entrance. The older children's playroom provided opportunities for independence, creativity, imagination and exploration. However, some younger children did not experience a rich, stimulating indoor environment. For example, the spaces lacked real life resources, loose parts and interesting and exciting invitations to play. There were some comfortable and cosy spaces for children to rest and relax throughout the nursery. However, some of these could be further developed to make the environment more homely. Staff had identified these areas to develop through self-evaluation and were in the early stages of planning how to make improvements (**see area for improvement 1**).

Children benefited from free flow play between the indoor and outdoor area. Families commented positively on the use of the outdoors. They told us: "I like the fact the children get outdoors as much as possible" and "The door is open to the garden in their new room and my child loves the freedom". This enabled children to have choice and direct their own play. The outdoor space offered opportunities to explore, investigate, and engage in imaginative and active play. For example, children hunted for bugs, relaxed on the hammock, and enjoyed balancing and climbing.

The arrangements for monitoring, maintenance and repair of the setting and equipment were not sufficient to ensure actions were taken without delay. For example, staff had cordoned off an area in the garden where materials were stored that needed to be disposed of. Despite the manager's efforts to have them removed, the provider had not yet addressed this, and the materials remained in the nursery garden. Care and attention needed to be given to the garden to ensure it was a tidy and inviting space. The garden was not well presented and ready for children to play in. A few areas, such as the sand pit and outdoor shelter lacked resources. This meant that children did not always experience high quality facilities (**see area for improvement 2**).

Children experienced a well-ventilated setting which helped to keep them safe and healthy. They were well supported to wash their hands at key times throughout the day which minimised the risk of potential spread of infection.

Children's personal information was securely stored. Families were informed about the use of CCTV through clear signage displayed. A policy was in place to share information about the purposes of CCTV however, it did not include information on the storage and retention of data. We signposted the manager to guidance to support them to review this and ensure families were well informed.

Areas for improvement

1. To enable all children to be cared for in an environment that meets their needs and supports them to reach their full potential, the manager and staff should as a minimum ensure play spaces offer a range of resources and materials to effectively challenge and stimulate children and reflect their current interests and curiosities.

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 keep children safe and healthy, the provider should ensure that children experience an environment that is well maintained. This should include but is not limited to:

- a) review the environment for potential risks and take action to address these
- b) implement an effective system for maintenance and repair and ensure actions identified are appropriately and timeously addressed.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17).

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.

Quality Indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The vision, values and aims reflected the service provided. This meant that families had clear expectations of the service. Families had improved opportunities to share their views and be involved in the life of the nursery. The staff had begun to implement different ways to consult with families such as questionnaires and involving them in developing the nursery garden. They used the feedback shared by families to make improvements to the setting. This demonstrated their views were actively listened to. Most families told us they felt involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service.

Quality assurance processes had been developed and were having a positive impact on improving outcomes for children. For example, improvements had been made to the management of medication and quality of observations of children's play and learning. Informal monitoring of staff practice took place. We discussed the benefits of formalising this to support consistency of quality across the setting.

The improvement plan reflected the current priorities in the setting and supported the development of key areas of practice. The manager recognised that one key priority identified was too broad and therefore progress was limited in this area. They planned to continue with this into the next cycle of improvement to ensure it was fully implemented. Staff had been involved in the self-evaluation process. This included auditing the environment and creating action plans for the play spaces across the nursery. They were in the early stages of implementing improvements and this was bringing about positive change. The staff and manager were responsive to suggestions made during the inspection to improve outcomes 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.

Quality Indicator 4.3 - Staff deployment

Staff were respectful and supportive of each other. This created a positive environment for children and families. Families told us, "Each member of staff is approachable", "Staff are very friendly and happy to chat away with any issues you may have big or small" and "Staff are welcoming and friendly. You get a real sense they care about the children and take the time to get to know them and their interests".

Staff breaks were well managed with consistent staff supporting children at busier times of the day, for example, during mealtimes. This meant children experienced continuity of care. Staff absences had minimal disruption to children's routines as supply staff were familiar to the children. This meant children experienced care from staff who they knew and had positive relationships with.

Staff worked well together to ensure that they were available to support children in areas across the nursery. For example, staff spread across the indoors and outdoors of the nursery, meaning children were well supervised and supported in each area. They communicated effectively and were flexible when children chose to move between different areas of the playroom and garden. Families told us that they felt there were always enough staff in 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 support children's overall wellbeing the service should further develop the use of children's personal plans to include the views of all children. They should be reviewed and signed by families at least on a six monthly basis.

This is to ensure I experience high quality care and support that is right for me and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that 'My personal 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 6 March 2023.

Action taken since then

Children's personal plans were updated with families and used to support their overall wellbeing. Their views were included, and staff used this information effectively to meet their needs. This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children's health and wellbeing needs continue to be met the service should ensure information for administering medication is accessible to staff at all times.

This is to ensure I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support, and is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that 'My care and support is provided in a planned and safe way, including if there is an emergency or unexpected event.' (HSCS 4.14)

This area for improvement was made on 6 March 2023.

Action taken since then

Staff had access to the information required for the administration of medication. The service had systems in place to manage medication effectively if they were unable to use technology. This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support a clean environment where children are safe the service should ensure regular cleaning and frequent handwashing is encouraged throughout the day.

This is to ensure I experience a high quality environment and 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)

This area for improvement was made on 6 March 2023.

Action taken since then

Children were supported effectively by staff to wash their hands at key times throughout the day. This supported them to be safe and healthy. This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure the service delivers high quality care and support where the views of stakeholders are meaningfully represented to improve outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that 'I am supported to give regular feedback on how I experience my care and support and the organisation uses learning from this to improve.' (HSCS 4.8).

This area for improvement was made on 6 March 2023.

Action taken since then

Children and families' ideas, suggestions and views were sought and used to inform changes within the setting. For example, they were asked about ways to improve the garden and their suggestions used. 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?	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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