

Treetop Family Nurture Centre Day Care of Children

Hillend Road Inverkeithing KY11 1PL

Telephone: 01383 602 376

Type of inspection:

Unannounced

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Service provided by:

Fife Council

Service no: CS2004074404

Service provider number:

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About the service

Treetop Family Nurture Centre operates over two sites in Fife, one in Inverkeithing and one in Rosyth. Across both settings, no more than 174 children can be cared for at any one time.

Treetop Family Nurture Centre Inverkeithing can care for 100 children, aged zero to an age to attend primary school. The service currently takes children aged two to an age not yet attending primary school. The purpose-built setting has four playrooms for children and each has direct access to their own toilets and outdoor play spaces. There are also other rooms available to offer family support sessions. The service shares a campus with the local primary and high schools and is close to local transport links and amenities.

Treetop Family Nurture Centre Rosyth can care for 74 children, aged two to an age to attend primary school. The service is in a residential area, close to local primary schools and some shops. It is built within greenspace and a small allotment has been created in the grounds. Children are cared for across three playrooms and have direct access to toilets and outdoor play. A 'flexi space' and a 'Community Room' are also used by staff, children and families.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 20 and Tuesday 21 May 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 since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with 151 children
- received feedback from 16 of their family members
- spoke with 21 staff and the leadership team
- observed practice and daily life
- · reviewed documents
- · spoke with one visiting professional.

Key messages

- Children were happy and confident in their play, enjoying a good range of experiences in line with their needs and interests.
- There were clear, individualised strategies in place for children who needed additional support, including family support programmes and input from other professionals.
- Children's personal plans were improving and we encouraged staff to consider how they plan to meet the needs of all children as individuals.
- Improvements had been made to the premises to offer all children high quality facilities that promoted positive outcomes and there were plans for further refurbishments in the near future.
- Leaders had confidently led improvements in the service, consulting children and families, while empowering staff to make informed changes based on best practice.
- The current staff team worked well together to ensure children were well supervised almost all of the time, while also offering individualised care and support to some children.
- Ongoing instability in some parts of the staff team represented a risk to the sustainability of the improvements made.

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?	4 - Good
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?

4 - Good

We found important strengths that clearly outweighed areas for improvement in this key question. This contributed to positive outcomes for children and, therefore, we made an evaluation of **good**.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, confident and enjoying their time at nursery. Staff were warm, kind and caring, offering children help and guidance when they needed it. Children were supported to build emotional resilience by staff who encouraged them to recognise and talk about their feelings. This included when there was conflict in children's play. As a result, children were developing skills for life. In addition, there were good programmes in place to ensure that families felt supported. Staff understood that this support was an essential part of meeting children's holistic wellbeing needs. They carefully considered what was important to children and families so they could support most children to progress and achieve.

Children's personal plans had been developed to ensure they received the right support at the right time to meet their health and wellbeing needs. Staff spoke confidently about how they ensured children remained safe and protected from harm, using personal plans to assess and plan for any known risks. There were clear overviews available so all staff knew how to meet children's needs. Staff had good relationships with other professionals and this helped them to implement a range of strategies to meet children's needs. This was most effective where children had identified additional support needs. For example, we saw individualised routines and strategies being offered to children that helped them to build positive relationships with others and settle into their day calmly and confidently. Some children shared their learning confidently from their personal learning journals, helping them feel included. Families told us they also felt included in developing their child's personal plan. One parent said, "Regular review meetings are held. I know I can schedule a meeting at any time." We encouraged staff to consider how they can extend their personal planning approaches to fully respect the needs, rights and choices of all children.

Almost all children enjoyed positive mealtime experiences, both indoors and outdoors. Children could choose when they ate in a relaxed and unhurried way, across a few spaces. This approach helped to keep the size of groups small, offering better opportunities for staff to spend quality time with them. There were clear roles and responsibilities between staff so that the routine was smooth and consistent. Children were able to be independent, serving themselves and cleaning away their own dishes. The meals offered were nutritious and well-presented to encourage children to eat. This was helping them to develop positive relationships with food. Staff were keen to continue improving mealtime experiences, for example, changing the way meals were organised for some children. We encouraged them to continue monitoring and evaluating how food experiences meet children's needs, rights and choices while keeping them safe and healthy.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were able to choose from a good range of play and learning experiences that helped them to achieve. Most experiences were based on children's interests and there were good opportunities for children to be independent, for example, mixing their own paint and making their own playdough. Children told us they enjoyed playing at nursery with the toys and with friends. One child told us, "I like playing with my friends. I like singing songs."

Families also told us they were happy with the play and learning their children experienced. One parent said, "My child loves outdoors so she is always outside and to be involved in any activity that she wants to participate in." Children had a few opportunities to spend time in the local community, visiting woodland areas and other amenities. They would benefit from spending more time in the local community, including natural greenspaces. This would foster opportunities for children to experience the full impact that outdoor play and learning offers to achieve their potential.

Children's interests were used to plan play most of the time. Some staff were confident in providing play and learning experiences that helped children to achieve. A few staff were developing their practice and there were plans to focus on enhancing children's play to support their emerging literacy skills. All staff had been included in learning and development opportunities that supported them to refresh their understanding of high quality play and learning. This had impacted positively on most children's experiences. We discussed with leaders where further improvements could be made to ensure all children experience consistently high quality play and learning that helps them to achieve their potential. As staff develop their practice, it will be important for them to have strong, positive role models to aspire to so that interactions during play are rich and meaningful to children's development.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of **good** for this key question, where we identified strengths and some improvements would maximise children's wellbeing.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were benefitting from the investments made to improve the quality of the setting. There were some fun, exciting and creative resources available for children to use in their play. This encouraged them to be curious and imaginative. Staff were building on the open-ended resources available to encourage children's independence, confidence and self-esteem. This included resources which supported them to explore their emotions. Staff had led on making improvements to the setting for play and learning. For example, the entrance area for children and families in the Rosyth service was warm, welcoming and inviting. This helped children and families to feel safe and secure from the start. One parent told us, "We have noticed a huge difference within my son's nursery room. My son can now choose from a range of activities throughout the room and outdoors. We have noticed there are a lot more resources than there was last year and this has had a positive impact for my child." We encouraged staff to share their ideas and use each other's strengths to promote consistency across the setting. This will ensure that all children experience high quality facilities that promote positive outcomes.

Staff worked well together to identify and remove risks to children, almost all of the time. They had made significant improvements to their knowledge and understanding of risk which meant children were kept safe and healthy. Risk assessments were being reviewed regularly and there were clear links between significant incidents and how the service had responded to improve children's safety. Children had also been included in learning how to keep themselves safe using best practice guidance. This had been done in a fun way so that children were keen to be involved. As a result of these measures, we were confident that children were safe and protected from avoidable harm.

Children played in a mostly clean setting where staff followed best practice in infection prevention and control. Children and staff worked together to keep the space clean and safe. For example, children were encouraged to wash their hands frequently. The provider was planning to carry out refurbishment works in the Inverkeithing building to improve the toilet and food preparation spaces as well as some flooring.

This was planned to meet a previous requirement we made. As the works were planned for the very near future, we have de-escalated the requirement to an area for improvement under this key question. **See area for improvement one.**

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children play in a safe, secure and well-maintained environment, the provider should provide safe flooring, toilets and food preparation areas to reduce the risk of the spread of infection.

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).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate document, 'Space to Grow and Thrive: Design guidance for early learning and childcare and school age childcare settings.'

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

Children benefitted from the commitment of staff to improve their practice. They had a shared vision of what they wanted children to achieve and how they wanted to support families. Children were asked their opinions and their views were respected. For example, they had been included in choosing new play resources for their rooms. Families also felt included and respected in developing the service. One parent said, "They do ask for feedback and the child's voice is considered." Families also told us that there was good communication from the nursery through newsletters and a private Facebook page. They were confident that they were listened to by leaders who had a good overview of any complaints, compliments and concerns families raised. This helped leaders to use families' opinions in their self-evaluation and improvement planning. Leaders were currently considering whether to use a different system for communication based on parent feedback. We encouraged them to continue to work with their children and families to find the best ways of including them in influencing change.

Leaders had implemented a variety of systems to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of children's care, play and learning. We reviewed progress against the three requirements and six areas for improvement outstanding from previous inspections and almost all of these had been met. This showed that the service had the capacity to improve. Staff were taking a lead in their own self-evaluation using relevant best practice guidance to ensure they met children's needs, rights and choices. The provider had also deployed additional resources to support staff through their improvement journey and this had impacted positively on children's experiences. There remained some inconsistencies in a few areas of practice such as medication and health care planning. Whilst we were confident children would receive the right support at the right time, we encouraged leaders to revisit roles and responsibilities so these are planned to pick up on any inconsistencies in staff practice. This would improve their oversight and governance of key areas of performance. As the service reviews and renews their improvement plan for the coming year, it will be important to re-prioritise their planned actions to meet the areas identified in this inspection while maintaining the improvements made over the last year. This will ensure children experience high quality, consistent care, play and learning that continues to improve over time.

How good is our staff team?

3 - Adequate

We found that improvements needed to be made by building on strengths to consistently promote positive outcomes for children. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as **adequate**.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff communicated well with each other throughout the day to respect most children's needs, rights and choices. Clear systems had been put in place to ensure all staff received important information about changes to children's needs and routines. For example, there was a well-used communication diary as well as daily 'huddles' where the teams in each room met briefly to share any relevant information. This impacted positively on children's daily experiences, as well as providing information for their personal plans that promoted positive outcomes for them and their families. Staff discussed what their roles and responsibilities were across the day to ensure children were well supervised. They also worked flexibly to change their routines if this is what children needed. When some children were being collected from nursery, the deployment of staff could be improved to offer children a more calm and relaxed routine. While we were confident that children were safe, there were opportunities to improve how this was managed so children still experienced quality time with staff that was meaningful to them. We encouraged staff to consider how they could make further changes to their deployment to offer all children a positive transition from nursery to home each day.

Staffing had been challenging in some parts of the nursery. Leaders had worked hard to maintain the ratio of staff to children while also ensuring children were being cared for by people familiar to them and their families. Temporary supply staff were offered a robust and detailed induction which focussed on meeting children's needs, including any additional supports that were in place for individual children. As a result, children's daily experiences were mostly positive and consistent. The instability in the staff team had impacted on the consistency of some areas of practice; for example, not all families had been offered a catch up with their child's keyworker. One parent commented that, the "service does appear to be struggling with staffing levels." Some staff had not been able to attend relevant training to help them improve. A few staff told us that the lack of continuity in staffing had impacted on their own wellbeing and that they did not always feel they were offering children the best experiences possible. We were concerned that continued inconsistency in parts of the staff team represented a risk to sustaining the improvements made since the last inspection. We asked the provider to ensure that staffing is planned to meet the needs, rights and choices of children and families so they consistently experience high-quality care, play and learning. See area for improvement one.

Areas for improvement

- 1. To offer children and families high-quality, consistent and sustained care, play and learning, the provider should ensure staffing arrangements are appropriate for the health, wellbeing and safety of children and families. This should include, but is not limited to:
- (a) staffing arrangements which promote strong connections and meaningful relationships between staff, children and families
- (b) staffing arrangements which promote positive staff wellbeing, including ensuring staff can attend training relevant to their role.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that "I am supported and care for by people I know so that I experience consistency and continuity" (HSCS 4.16).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate document, 'Me, my family and my childcare setting.'

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 31 March 2024, the provider must ensure children play in a clean and safe environment that protects their health and wellbeing and reduces the risk of the spread of infection.

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

- a) ensure staff dispose of waste appropriately, especially when dealing with food and nappies
- b) ensure cleaning materials are stored safely to reduce the risk of the spread of infection
- c) ensure staff are trained and competent in infection prevention and control practices, in line with best practice, policies and procedures.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) and (d) (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 an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment" (HSCS 5.22).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Health Protection Scotland document, 'Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings (Day Care and Childminding Settings).'

This requirement was made on 28 November 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Children played in a clean and safe environment because staff had successfully implemented their training in infection prevention and control. Cleaning materials were stored safely and waste was disposed of appropriately. We were confident that the measures in place reduced the risk of the spread of infection and protected children's health and wellbeing.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 2

By 15 August 2024, the provider must ensure children play in a safe, secure and well-maintained environment.

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

- a) provide safe flooring to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls
- b) provide toilets and food preparation areas which can be cleaned effectively to reduce the risk of the spread of infection.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(d) (Welfare of users) and 10(2) (Fitness of Premises) 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 environment is secure and safe" (HSCS 5.17).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate document, 'Space to grow: Design guidance for early learning and childcare and out of school care settings.'

This requirement was made on 28 November 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

The provider had clear, time-limited plans in place to replace some flooring in the premises and update toilet and food preparation areas. There had been some delays due to circumstances outwith the provider's control. New dates had been set and it was expected that these planned refurbishments would be completed by 15 August 2024. We were confident that this would offer children a safe, secure and well-maintained environment to enjoy their care, play and learning.

We have de-escalated this requirement and re-stated it as an area for improvement under key question 2, 'How good is our setting?'

Met - within timescales

Requirement 3

By 31 March 2024, the provider must ensure children are kept safe and healthy by staff who identify and remove risks to children across the whole day.

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

- a) monitor and evaluate how staff assess and manage risk, including how well they work together to promote a safe environment
- b) offer staff frequent and structured feedback on how they assess and manage risk, including how well they work together to promote a safe environment.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (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 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).

This requirement was made on 28 November 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Children were kept safe and healthy because staff were recognising and removing risks throughout the day. Staff had supported children to learn how to keep themselves safe. The leadership team had frequently given staff feedback on their practice that helped them to improve. We were confident that staff had the skills and knowledge to keep children safe, secure and healthy.

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 promote positive outcomes in children's individual wellbeing, the provider should ensure staff support all children through effective use of personal planning. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) ensuring personal plans are well-structured and organised so staff can act quickly and sensitively
- b) creating plans that can be understood by all staff, children and families
- c) using personal plans as working documents to promote consistency and continuity of care
- d) having personal plans which act as effective tools for managing risk.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

"My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected" (HSCS 1.23).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate document, 'Guide for providers on personal planning: Early learning and childcare.'

This area for improvement was made on 29 November 2023.

Action taken since then

Almost all of children's personal plans detailed their needs and how staff planned to support them to be safe and healthy. Staff had implemented personal planning systems that were easily accessible for everyone. They regularly updated the personal plans so changes in children's lives were responded to quickly. This included where staff could minimise any risks to their care, welfare and wellbeing. While further improvements would enhance some children's experiences, we were confident that sufficient progress had been made to promote positive outcomes in children's individual wellbeing.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children develop a positive relationship with food, the provider should ensure all children experience a caring and positive social experience at lunchtime. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) creating an unhurried and relaxed atmosphere for eating lunch through clear roles and responsibilities of staff
- b) creating opportunities for children and staff to build close relationships at lunchtimes
- c) ensuring the overall size and composition of the group at lunchtime is right for children
- d) monitoring what children are eating to meet their nutritional needs
- e) offering children suitably presented, nutritious meals in line with current guidance.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

"I can enjoy unhurried snack and meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible" (HSCS 1.35).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Care Inspectorate practice note, 'Keeping children safe: supporting positive mealtime experiences in early learning and childcare (ELC)' and the Care Inspectorate document, 'Food Matters'.

This area for improvement was made on 28 November 2023.

Action taken since then

Children enjoyed positive, social and relaxed mealtime experiences with staff. They were encouraged to be independent and chose from a good selection of well presented, nutritious options. Staff spent time with children at mealtimes, monitoring what they ate while also building relationships with them in a genuine way. The size and composition of the group at lunchtime was well managed because children could choose when and where they ate. We were confident that this routine supported children to build positive relationships with food.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To promote positive outcomes for children, the provider should ensure that appropriate staffing arrangements are in place to promote continuity of care across the day. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) ensuring there are positive transitions for children across the day
- b) communicating effectively with families across the day
- c) facilitating positive transitions in staffing to promote consistency and continuity of care
- d) planning staffing to meet children's care and learning needs at all times.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

"If I am supported and cared for by a team or more than one organisation, this is well coordinated so that I experience consistency and continuity" (HSCS 4.17).

This area for improvement was made on 28 November 2023.

Action taken since then

Leaders had worked efficiently to address gaps and inconsistencies with staffing. In the Rosyth setting, the staff team was stable which meant almost all children experienced continuity and consistency in their care, play and learning. In the Inverkeithing setting, there were ongoing issues with staff absence and recruitment. This meant that, while improvements had been made, we remained concerned about how well this could be maintained and whether the staffing arrangements were sustainable over time. We found some inconsistencies in important aspects of practice, including during transitions at the end of the day. We understood that almost all of these circumstances were outwith the provider's control and recognised that leaders were prioritising how they managed staffing arrangements to minimise the impact on children and families. However, staff told us that the current staffing situation was impacting on their wellbeing as well as their ability to fully meet children's needs, rights and choices. Some elements of this area for improvement had been met and others were outstanding.

This area for improvement is no longer in place and has been incorporated into a new area for improvement under key question 4, 'How good is our staff team?'

Previous area for improvement 4

To promote consistency and continuity of care for children, the provider should ensure temporary, supply staff have access to important, relevant information that helps them to meet individual children's needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

"I experience stability in my care and support from people who know my needs, choices and wishes, even if there are changes in the service or organisation" (HSCS 4.15).

This area for improvement was made on 28 November 2023.

Action taken since then

Temporary supply staff were given support when they started to understand how to meet children's individual needs. There was a detailed induction process in place which was focussed on promoting positive outcomes for children. Leaders aimed to ensure that temporary supply staff were as consistent as possible, so they were familiar to children and families. Families were informed about any changes to temporary supply staffing, which helped them to feel included.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

To meet children's needs, rights and choices, the provider should ensure staff work flexibly and support each other to work as a team. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) staff proactively recognising gaps in their routines and remedying them
- b) staff communicating appropriately with their colleagues to share information
- c) staff deploying themselves to ensure effective supervision and quality engagement with children across the day
- d) staff recognising and planning for busy times of the day.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

"My care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well" (HSCS 3.19).

This area for improvement was made on 28 November 2023.

Action taken since then

Staff had implemented positive communication strategies that helped everyone to respond quickly and sensitively to children's needs. For example, staff collaborated in 'huddles' each day to discuss any changes in children's lives and to define roles and responsibilities for the day. Staff also maintained their communication throughout the day so they could be flexible in supporting children's needs, rights and choices. We encouraged leaders to continue monitoring this area for improvement to ensure that staff continue to receive constructive feedback on their teamwork and deployment to promote positive outcomes for children.

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?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good

How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.3 Staff deployment	3 - Adequate

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