

School's Out Penicuik Day Care of Children

Penicuik North Kirk
95 John Street
PENICUIK
EH26 8AG

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
3 June 2024

Service provided by:
Perceptive Action C.I.C.

Service provider number:
SP2014012332

Service no:
CS2021000033

About the service

School's Out Penicuik operates from two buildings. One within Penicuik North Kirk, which has the use of one room, kitchen area, indoor toilet facilities and an outdoor toilet. The children in this space also have direct access to an outdoor area.

The second site is within Strathesk Primary School, Penicuik. Children within this space have access to one room and toilet facilities. Children did not have direct access to outdoors, however, do have use of the school playground.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 72 primary school aged children up to entry to S2 at any one time. Of those 72 children, 34 will be cared for at Penicuik North Kirk and no more than 38 may be cared for at Strathesk Primary School.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 28 May 2024 between 14:30 and 17:30. We returned to the service on 30 May 2024 between 15:00 and 17:30. One inspector carried out the inspection.

To prepare for this inspection we reviewed information about the service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluations we:

- spoke with and observed children using the service
- received written feedback from 12 families
- spoke with staff, the manager and the leadership team
- spoke with the provider
- observed practice and children's routines and experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff listened to children and took a genuine interest in them as individuals.
- Children invited staff into their play, with laughter and fun being evident within these interactions.
- Personal plans should be further developed to ensure that they are meaningful working documents that are used to inform practice.
- Children were freely leading their own play and following their own ideas.
- The service had worked hard to connect with their community and offer children new play and learning experiences.
- Play spaces had improved since our last inspection, with thoughtful, well organised resources.
- The manager should continue to strengthen the quality assurance system to ensure that gaps in practice are addressed.
- The provider should revisit safeguarding and child protection procedures with all staff to strengthen their knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- Effective team working fostered a warm atmosphere where staff were courteous, respectful and children were listened to.

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?	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/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced interactions from staff that were kind, caring and responsive to their individual needs. Staff took a genuine interest in children as individuals, listening to them attentively as they shared their news from their day at school and events from home. Staff's positive body language sent the message to children that they were important and their contributions were welcomed. Children invited staff into their play, with laughter and fun being evident within these interactions. This contributed to children's overall wellbeing and the positive relationships that had been built.

Medication was being stored in line with good practice guidance. Staff could confidently talk through children's medication and the steps they would take when administering this. We asked the service to address a discrepancy in relation to the dosage on prescription labels and the dosage detailed in children's care plans. The service was receptive to this and took steps to action this during the inspection. The service should continue to develop and strengthen their monitoring and audit system to ensure that any discrepancies were identified and addressed in a timely manner. This would contribute to children's overall health and wellbeing.

Children's ideas around food choices were welcomed through the suggestion box and through the children's committee. Children had access to fresh water and fruit throughout the session. Children were supported by staff to prepare their own snack. However, due to the number of children all accessing snack at the same time, this resulted in children waiting for a long period of time in a crowded space to access certain resources. This felt busy and rushed. This meant staff spent time supervising and making sure all children had accessed to simple items such as butter. We would encourage staff to reflect on the serving of snack and look at ways in which this could be further developed. For example, small butter dishes spread across two tables and introducing a rolling snack for children as they arrive at the service. This would support staff to sit with children and make the most of this opportunity to have one to one conversations, enhancing this experience for children.

The service had introduced individual books for children as part of their personal planning approach. These captured children's own personal views and supported them to share what was important to them. These were a good starting point and the principles that underpinned these books were positive. However, the purpose of these books and the information held within them required further clarity. This would help make sure that personal plans were meaningful working documents that were used to inform practice. This should include details of any changes to the world around a child and current support strategies that were being used. These should be updated as an when changes occur or as a minimum every six months in line with legislation. The provider was receptive to this feedback. To support this improvement, we directed the service to the Care Inspectorate, 'Guide for Providers on Personal Planning: Early Learning and Childcare' (2021) (**see area for improvement 1**).

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were freely leading their own play and following their own ideas. They had access to a variety of resources both indoors and outdoors which supported them to be creative and imaginative in their play. For example, a child had used the furniture and resources to build their own den inside. They worked with another child to problem solve, design and create their own private space. A sign alerted staff that they were not allowed in the space. Staff admired and praised the hard work and creativity, as the child shared their delight with their final design. This supported children to build confidence and follow their own interests.

Throughout the space children were engaged in their play. Some children spent time with friends, while some chose to spend time alone in small comfortable spaces that had been created. Parents told us, "Staff are friendly and engaging with my child. The time they spend with other children means they are socialising which is a big thing for them" and "Very friendly and professional staff with loads of different and varied activities". Staff knew children well and spoke confidently about what they liked to do when they were in the space. Staff took a risk benefit approach to play by encouraging children to risk assess their own play and challenge themselves in a safe way. As a result, children again were free to explore, follow their own ideas and have fun. The service had plans to further develop this practice with future staff training and development. This would further enhance children's play and learning opportunities.

The service used the local and wider community parks, green spaces and football areas to enhance children's play experiences. Staff had proactively reached out to local organisations and businesses to offer children new opportunities. For example, paper making at the Penicuik Press, the local bowling club to learn to play bowls and the local emergency services. This use of the local community services came through on parent feedback as a strength of the service. The service had recently introduced intergenerational working with visiting the local care home. This had given children a variety of new experiences and the opportunity to build new relationships.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that children are supported by an effective personal planning approach, the manager and staff should ensure they are working closely with the child, their family and partner agencies. This information should be used to create a meaningful effective plan which focuses on outcomes. This should be reviewed and updated as and when changes occur or as a minimum every six months in line with legislation.

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).

How good is our setting?

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 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Play spaces had improved since our last inspection. Staff could share examples of where resources and play spaces had been developed to support children's current interests. For example, cosy quiet spaces, a reading area with chapter books that had been requested by older children and additional resources outdoors. Children were involved in developing their play spaces through a suggestion box and children's committee. Spaces were well maintained and resources were organised. As a result, play spaces felt inviting and children were engaged in their play.

Children at the Kirk were freely moving between indoors and outdoors. Children at Strathesk were supported to go outdoors when they chose to. Outdoors children had access to a variety of different play spaces. Loose parts had been introduced in some areas to support children's creativity and imagination. The service should continue to build on these resources both indoors and outdoors. This would continue to enhance children's ability to think imaginatively, promote a sense of wonder, adventure and excitement in their play.

The overall environment was clean and inviting. Ongoing monitoring and maintenance checks meant that any issues were quickly highlighted and addressed. Children's toilet areas were clean and staff monitored these throughout the session. Staff and children practiced good handwashing. This all contributed to the welcoming, positive environment that had been created.

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

Monitoring and quality assurance systems were in place. An improvement plan was used to inform ongoing improvements and influenced staff training. Staff, children and families' views were welcomed as part of the ongoing improvements within the service. Children's voices were seen as important and the staff supported them through a variety of different routes to share their views. For example, verbal discussions and group conversations, floor book, suggestion box, questionnaires, feedback forms and children's committee. The manager should continue to strengthen the quality assurance system to ensure that this addresses gaps in practice. Such as, medication and personal plans. This would contribute to the culture of continuous improvement that had been developed.

The manager had reached out to key professionals to request support and further guidance on key areas of practice. For example, the manager had contacted Midlothian Council to request for further support in relation to supporting children with additional support needs. The service should continue with their plans to improve this area of practice. This would strengthen staff knowledge, skills and introduce new tools that could be used to inform their practice. This would contribute to improved outcomes for all.

Ongoing support and supervision and annual appraisals supported the manager to build positive relationships with the team, set training targets and discuss any gaps in practice. The senior management team worked together to create a culture of continuous improvement across the service. Staff spoke positively about their role within the team and shared that they felt valued by all. This contributed to the positive atmosphere that children experienced.

We noted gaps in the child protection record keeping and referral procedures. The manager had already identified some of these gaps and had taken steps to make improvements in this area of practice. For example, the manager had carried out individual learning discussions and reflective group conversations with staff. The service should revisit their child protection and safeguarding procedures with all staff. The provider was receptive to this feedback. This would continue to strengthen this area of practice and ensure everyone is confident in their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection (**see area for improvement 1**).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's overall safety, health and wellbeing, the provider should revisit and strengthen all staffs knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources' (HSCS 4.27).

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

Effective team working fostered a warm atmosphere where staff were courteous and respectful. This enabled staff to have time to support, speak and listen to children. As a result, interactions with children were kind, caring and genuine. Staff knew children well and could confidently talk about their individual likes, dislikes and wishes. Positive relationships between staff and children were evident. One parent told us, "Friendly staff who all get to know not just the child but the family as a whole". This contributed to children and families feeling valued and an important part of the service.

Staff communicated well as a team and across the whole organisation to work together to best meet the needs of children and families. Staff were proactive in recognising where gaps in staff deployment may exist, and these were soon remedied. For example, when a task took them away from an area where they were supporting or observing children. Staff used a private social media group chat to share ideas, share resources and share key information. Staff worked in partnership with management to ensure that all staff were effectively deployed to best support children. For example, school drop off, collections and organising cover for staff absences. Staff covering at different settings introduced themselves to children. This contributed to effective supervision and quality interactions with children across the session, as well as sending the message to children that they mattered.

Some staff were currently undertaking qualifications relevant to their role. This had brought about the opportunity for reflective discussions within the team and shared learning opportunities. This was encouraged and supported by the management team. Whilst we highlighted key gaps in some staff practice in relation to child protection and safeguarding procedures, we were confident that these would be actioned. This has been addressed in 'Key Question 3: How good is our leadership?' This would contribute to positive outcomes for all.

Complaints

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

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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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