

Linktown Nursery Ltd

Day Care of Children

26a Balfour Street
KIRKCALDY
KY2 5HB

Telephone: 07432 116 512

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
26 June 2024

Service provided by:
Linktown Nursery Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2018013062

Service no:
CS2018364010

About the service

Linktown Nursery Ltd is situated in a residential area of central Kirkcaldy, close to local amenities including the school, shops, parks and transport links. The service provides an early learning and childcare service to a maximum of 45 children at any one time from the age of two years and who are not yet attending primary school, of whom, no more than 10 children are aged two years to three.

The accommodation is provided in a spacious one storey building containing two dedicated playrooms, with additional rooms for other dedicated activities, such as creative play and a quiet room. Children also have access to a large, enclosed garden area shared by all groups for outdoor play.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26 June 2024 between 08:45 and 17:00. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. Feedback was given on the same day.

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
- spoke with staff members
- reviewed feedback from 10 families using MS Forms
- reviewed feedback from staff members employed in the service using MS Forms
- spoke with senior management and provider
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

All areas for improvement from the last inspection have been met, resulting in improved outcomes for children and families.

Children's play and learning experiences have been enhanced through a wide range of rich resources across both playrooms.

Children benefitted from a staff team who were committed to continuous improvement of the nursery which was leading to positive outcomes.

Children experienced very warm, caring and nurturing support from staff who knew them very well.

Children's needs were well supported by effective personal planning. This ensured staff caring for children had a clear overview of their individual needs and preferences.

Daily access to fresh air and outdoor play experiences supported children's health and wellbeing.

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?	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?

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 quality indicator as very good.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were supported by nurturing and caring staff. Staff were responsive to children's needs providing reassurance and comfort when needed. This approach helped children to feel safe, secure and loved. Children and their families were welcomed into the service each day, this supported positive connections. Most families who completed our MS Forms online survey strongly agreed or agreed that they have a strong connection with the staff caring for my child. Some comments included:

"Every staff member has a very good relationship with me and my child. They know their likes and dislikes and are very enthusiastic. Despite my child only attending one day per week they remember everything relating to their care well."

"The staff are lovely and always take the time to update me on my daughter's day at pick up."

"Always very friendly."

Personal planning was a key strength. Children's health and wellbeing was very well supported using effective personal planning documents. Key information was gathered in partnership with families and was used effectively to help staff provide individualised care. Staff were knowledgeable about each child's needs and strategies in place to support them. Plans were regularly reviewed and updated with families to ensure children were receiving care which met their current needs.

Mealtimes were unhurried and relaxed with staff sitting with the children to encourage them to eat well and safely. Children were supported by caring staff who were focused on their wellbeing as they ate. Children enjoyed sociable conversations with staff. Children were developing confidence and important life skills, by independently undertaking tasks, such as helping set up the table or clearing away their own plates. Snack choices were nutritious and supported healthy choices for children. This encouraged children to make choices and develop a healthy relationship with food.

Children's health and wellbeing was well supported. There were quiet spaces where children could relax and rest. The daily routine and pace of the day was carefully considered to ensure it was responsive to children's needs. Staff worked together to ensure they provided consistency and continuity for children.

Staff had a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and spoke confidently of the steps to take should a concern or a support need arise for a child or family. We found that staff at all levels were confident in these processes and understood the importance of seeking support for children and families.

Staff ensured that children with medical needs were supported with dignity and privacy. Very effective systems were in place for all medication. Appropriate information was recorded which ensured it was administered in line with best practice guidance. Creative use of QR codes meant that families could quickly complete online forms and this made the process easier.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children benefitted from a variety of play and learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors. Children experienced a balance of spontaneous and planned activities and had opportunities to lead their own play and learning.

Literacy and numeracy were well supported through a range of experiences. Staff understood the importance of language development and provided a variety of activities to support this. In the younger age group children enjoyed sharing books with staff throughout the day. They frequently sang together as they played. Older children were developing confidence in learning early literacy and numeracy skills. We saw children counting aloud as they played, mark making and recognising some numbers in the environment.

Planning approaches were child centred and responsive to children's interest. Children were actively involved in planning and leading their own play and learning. Creative use of learning walls highlighted children's thoughts, ideas and discussions. This contributed to children feeling valued and respected. Staff told us how their observations of children, identified individual learning targets and informed their responsive planning approaches. This meant that children were engaged in play and were making good progress. One parent told us "I feel my child has a wide variety of different play experiences from visiting the forest, playing outside. Learning key skills and playing in ways which bring on their motor skills and imagination."

All children had the opportunity to play and learn outdoors during our visit, with direct access to an outdoor area. We observed children deeply engaged in their play and two children had found some snails and were investigating these and looking at books to learn more about snails. Staff enabled this rich learning through skilled interactions and use of books to support curiosity and enquiry.

Good use was made of the local community. Children regularly visited local green spaces and places of interest. This supported children to develop strong connections with their wider community.

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

Children and families benefitted from an environment that was well furnished, inviting and welcoming. The entrance space was carefully considered, wall displays gave families key information on staffing and nursery news. Each child had a space for their coat and bag and a tray to store things that were important to them; this approach promoted a sense of belonging.

Children confidently moved across the playrooms and took part in a range of play experiences. Staff had worked hard to create an environment where children felt welcome and relaxed. Playrooms were carefully considered, and staff were creative in their provision. For example, a variety of authentic real-life objects enhanced play spaces and promoted children's curiosity and creativity. Consideration had been given to creating quiet spaces for children to rest and relax. This supported children's emotional wellbeing. Children told us they could have a sleep if they wanted to. One child said, "I'm too busy to sleep but there is a bed in the Ivy room."

Free flow access to the outdoor spaces enabled children to be independent, direct their own play and supported them to be active and healthy. The garden provided a range of spaces for development of physical skills and exploration. Families who responded to our MS Forms survey told us that their child could play outdoors always or very often. Some of their comments included:

"My child has been to the forest, to the train station to learn about trains, every day she attends is outside in the vast garden to play and learn about wildlife and plants. This is vital as being a busy working parent I do not always have the time to spend nurturing this area of development therefore it takes away a lot of the stress from me knowing she is flourishing at nursery."

"Good use of the garden, local parks, forest sessions, town centre, Links Market Walk."

"My child loves playing in the garden and getting messy!"

Risk assessments were in place. These were regularly reviewed and updated to ensure any risks were minimised for children, families and staff.

Staff demonstrated an understanding of infection prevention and control procedures, including supervising children during hand washing. Children washed their hands at appropriate times and were encouraged to do this independently before mealtimes and after toileting and personal care. A sink area had been creatively developed in the garden and this was well used by children before returning inside to play. This supported staff and children to minimise risks of infection and helped create a safe environment.

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

Staff were motivated, well led and enthusiastic about improving outcomes for all children. They were receptive to the support given by the management team, the local authority and the Care Inspectorate. This collaborative approach provided a clear focus for their shared vision, values and aims, including setting out clear responsibilities and expectations. The team worked together effectively to evaluate and reflect on their practice. They were keen to take forward current ideas, develop and implement best practice guidance. This resulted in children experiencing quality interactions and a broad range of stimulating play experiences centred around their emerging interests.

Quality assurance processes were in place, and this included an improvement plan with realistic targets to support children's overall development and to improve the service. Staff told us they had been engaging with best practice documents including Care Inspectorate's 'A quality framework for day care of children, childminding and school-age children' to support their ongoing self-evaluation. The staff team worked together effectively to evaluate and reflect on their practice. This approach supported a shared understanding of service improvements and that children benefitted from a culture of continuous improvement.

The views of children and families were regularly sought and valued. Their views influenced change and improvements in the setting. Most families who completed our MS Forms online survey strongly agreed or agreed that they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. One parent told us "we are always asked for feedback in a variety of forms."

Regular team meetings gave staff the opportunity to come together to reflect and discuss individual children's needs, also to identify the strengths and areas for development within the service. Staff received regular support and supervision from the management team. This enabled them to identify priorities for training, discuss wellbeing and receive feedback. Staff told us they felt valued and supported by the management team. This further enhanced positive relationships.

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

Children benefitted from a nurturing and caring staff team that knew them well. Staff had clear roles and responsibilities and communicated very well as a team. Staff were respectful and supportive of each other. They were very warm, caring and sensitive in their approach and demonstrated positive team working. This promoted a happy and secure environment for children.

Staffing in the nursery promoted consistency for children, which helped them to be familiar and secure with those caring for them. The staff team had a mix of skills, experience and knowledge and were observed working well as a team. Effective team working created a warm atmosphere where staff were courteous and respectful to each other, and this contributed to the positive ethos of the service. Staff clearly understood their individual roles and responsibilities. Senior staff were positive role models to other staff. This meant children benefitted from having staff who were trained, competent and skilled providing their care.

Staff were responsible for their own areas and ensured these were well maintained and resourced for the children.

Staff learning and development was actively encouraged within the service. Staff had protected time for training and professional reading. Staff told us that this helped them to develop their practice. Staff attended various training courses to help them meet children's needs and support positive outcomes for them. This included British Sign Language. This inclusive practice was welcomed by families, ensuring children's communications skills were supported and valued.

New staff were safely recruited and benefitted from an induction process that supported them to reflect at various stages of their induction. This approach enhanced their knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the service. The 'National Induction Resource' (Scottish Government 2023) was used well. As a result, staff were given sufficient time and support to understand what was expected of them.

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

The provider should ensure children are cared for in a safe and hygienic environment. The provider must support staff in implementing the necessary precautions to promote effective infection prevention and control practices within the setting. This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with 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 5.24). This area for improvement was made on 20 June 2023.

Action taken during follow up inspection 12 December 2023:

Children washed their hands at key times throughout the day. Clear policies were in place to ensure that food prep areas and resources for children were cleaned and well maintained. Some areas required further attention. For example, nappies were not stored correctly and the air vent in the toilets required cleaning. We encouraged the service to develop a maintenance log. This would ensure that all areas that could potentially impact on effective infection prevention and control are addressed in a timely manner. This would further minimise the risk of spread of infection to children.

This area for improvement has been partially met and will remain in place.

This area for improvement was made on 20 June 2023.

Action taken since then

This area for improvement has now been fully met. Handwashing is embedded into daily practice and staff support children throughout the day. Nappies are stored correctly and in line with best practice guidance. Air vents in toilets were clean and well maintained.

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?	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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.