

# Hillfoot Nursery Day Care of Children

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Glasgow  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
19 July 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Hillfoot Nursery Limited

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003881

**Service no:**  
CS2003036269

## About the service

Hillfoot Nursery is a daycare of children service which is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 38 children at any one time:

12 children 6 weeks to under 2 years

10 children 2 years to under 3 years

16 children 3 years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is based in Bearsden, East Dunbartonshire, and is near transport links and local amenities. The service provider is Hillfoot Nursery Ltd. The nursery has had a change of directors. The new directors took over the operation of the service in February 2024.

The accommodation is on one level and consists of three playrooms, toilets and kitchen facilities. The playrooms are well laid out, bright and welcoming. Children have daily access to the enclosed outdoor play area.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection that took place on Thursday 18 July 2024 between 09:15 and 18:30, when 30 children were attending the service. And Friday 19 July 2024 between 10:00 and 16:30, when 28 children were attending the service. Feedback was also given on this day.

The inspection was carried out by one inspector and a team manager 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
- spoke with two parents
- received feedback from 22 parents and five staff who completed our questionnaires
- spoke with childcare staff, the manager and the provider
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Throughout this report, any reference to parents also includes carers and guardians.

**Key messages**

- The children really liked coming to the service. They were very happy and relaxed and had fun as they took part in a range of enjoyable activities that challenged and excited them. The activities were linked to the children's current interests. They particularly enjoyed the freedom to run around and play outdoors.
- Staff were kind and caring toward the children, and had built loving and nurturing relationships with them. They listened to the children and supported, praised and encouraged them as they had fun playing with their friends.
- There were nice, relaxed interactions between the parents and staff. Parents valued the service and the part it played in the life of the community. They thought highly of the staff working there.
- Staff enjoyed working at the nursery and felt supported by the management. They had taken part in a good range of training which had helped them to develop their skills and knowledge in their childcare roles.
- The service should continue to develop and improve the outdoor play areas.
- The service should continue to develop the toys and equipment available to the children.

**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, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a positive impact on children's experiences.

### Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

We found that staff had good processes in place which helped them get to know the families and the children. This approach helped the children and families settle well into the service and build positive relationships. Through discussion and observations, we saw that staff worked very well as a team to meet the children's needs and personal preferences.

The children were relaxed and happy and enjoyed being at the nursery. Staff were nurturing, loving, caring, warm and kind towards the children. They gave them praise and encouragement, chatted with them, played with them and responded positively to their needs. Children arriving for the day were given a very warm welcome. We saw one child, who was initially slightly upset on arrival, being very well-supported in a sensitive way by staff and then very quickly settling in.

Daily feedback between staff and parents when parents dropped off and collected their children helped to support effective communication and continuity of care. One parent told us:

"The staff at the nursery are really excellent in regards to both the nurturing care they deliver and the support in learning and skill building for my child. Communication is excellent and we are very happy with the service."

Staff responded sensitively and compassionately to the children throughout the day. We looked at a range of documentation that made up a child's personal plan. This helped staff support the children's needs, wishes and choices. The service was updating how it collected and managed information to support the children. Management was in the process of rolling out their new family app. This will help staff and families keep the children's information up-to-date and support the ongoing development and care needs of each child.

Staff were aware of the children's individual dietary needs which were taken into account when planning lunches and snacks. Staff and children washed their hands before preparing and eating the food. This approach helped support good infection prevention and control procedures.

The children had a good range of freshly prepared food, as well as milk and water to drink. The older children self-selected what they wanted to eat. The children enjoyed the food and were happy as they chatted to the staff and each other. This approach helped the children develop their skills, confidence and independence. It promoted children's choices and built friendships.

Staff understood the importance of sleep and rest for children's overall development and wellbeing. Children had designated areas to allow them to sleep without being disturbed. We saw that staff sat with the children and comforted them, helping them settle, rest, and sleep. Staff followed safe sleeping procedures. This approach helped keep the children safe and supported the needs of the individual child.

Appropriate procedures were in place to record accidents and incidents. These were discussed with and signed off by parents.

The service had a medication procedure in place which helped staff administer medication safely to the children in their care and support the children's medical needs.

Most of the staff had undertaken paediatric first aid. These procedures helped keep children safe and supported staff in responding effectively to their care needs.

The manager had developed good links with other professionals to support children and families as and when required. This approach helped identify the next steps and techniques to help meet the children's individual needs and support positive outcomes for children.

### **Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning**

The staff's approach to play and learning was child-centred and responsive to the children's interests, wishes and level of skill. Children were involved in choosing what they would like to do. This helped the babies and children feel included in decision-making. They had good opportunities to be active, have fun, develop their skills and confidence and celebrate their successes. Staff listened to, and warmly responded to, the children's ideas and wishes regarding play. They provided good play and learning experiences that were tailored to the children's interests, offering both challenge and fun. We saw that staff gave the children individual care and cuddles, as needed. This approach clearly showed that staff were not only aware of but also committed to meeting the needs of the children they were caring for.

Within the baby room, the staff were very gentle and nurtured the babies. Staff spoke kindly to them and involved them in deciding what they were going to play with. Staff asked them what they would like to do and if they were finished playing. The babies were excited about the good range of activities both indoors and outdoors. For example, they were splashing the water and washing the dolls, stacking Duplo bricks, pushing the trains and lying on the floor looking at books. They also enjoyed playing outside, floating balls in the water, riding bikes, painting using cars to make tracks on the paper in a large tray and d being pushed in the swing. We saw staff continually praise and smile at the babies. Babies got lots of cuddles from the staff. They sat on staff members' knees, and snuggled, as they read books. This approach helped them feel loved and safe.

When asked what they liked about the service, one parent commented: "The communication, organisation and clarity from staff. It makes drop off and pick up feel easy and my little one is always content to be left with the team in the Cuddly Panda room."

Staff working with the children aged two to five ensured the pace of the day gave children lots of opportunities to play. Children were relaxed and happy. They smiled and laughed, and had fun as they chased balloons around the room, acted out a story using puppets and drew pictures together on the computer. They enjoyed 'washing dishes' and matching and writing numbers as well as mark-making on a large piece of paper. They played with construction and small world toys. They read books and took part in messy play. Staff smiled at and encouraged the children as they played. We saw that the children helped and encouraged each other and really liked being together.

All the children had regular opportunities, throughout the day, for fresh air and physical play. They really enjoyed playing outdoors, running about and playing with their friends. We saw the children climb, balance, run, roll large tyres and jump. They joined together to make up games. They also enjoyed playing with water, using containers to fill and pour. The children played very well together, and the staff supported them.

We saw that some of the toys and equipment needed to be replaced and the outdoor area needed to be improved. We discussed this with the management. We found that they were proactive in recognising the need for improvement in the outdoor space. They acknowledged the importance of enhancing the children's opportunities to play outdoors and were working together as a team to find ways to improve this.

Children told us:

"I like the home corner and construction."

"I like playing outside. The climbing frame is my favourite."

"I like playing with my friends. I like my teachers ..."

"I like playing with the dinosaurs and the mud kitchen. I like eating my breakfast and love the teachers."

"Playing with my friends, making things, drawing pictures, dancing in Jo Jingles."

Comments from parents included:

"The nursery is a community, it's a constant source of support and resilience, a pillar in our family ... I couldn't speak higher of nursery especially staff. [Child] knows all the staff ... I trust them completely ... The staff are my favourite thing about the nursery and we are so happy [child] is here."

"... Consistency between nursery and home is really helpful ... Staff know [child] well. Respond to [child], praise and positive reinforcement ... Good communication, use the learning journal ..."

## How good is our setting?

**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a positive impact on children's experiences.

### Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The nursery building had a secure door entry system. Staff monitored who entered and left the building. There was also a secured outdoor area. This meant that the children were kept safe and secure within the nursery and as they played outdoors.

The nursery setting had three playrooms. These were warm, bright, nicely decorated and had good natural light and ventilation. The rooms had enough space for children to play and relax in. Staff had set up the rooms to encourage the children to choose what they wanted to play with. This included cosy corners for the children to relax and rest as needed. Staff were keen to continue to develop the layout of the rooms.

This would help them meet the changing needs of the children attending the service. We found that within the rooms used by the children aged two to five, some of the areas and the range of toys and equipment needed to be improved to offer more choice and challenge and enhance the children's ability to take their play forward (see area for improvement 1).

As stated under Quality indicator 1.3, management and staff were working together to look at ways to improve the opportunities for children to have more choices to play outdoors and be able to free flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces which the children could access from the playrooms. They also had plans in place to improve the outdoor space and equipment. This approach will help extend and improve the range of equipment and enhance the experiences available to the babies and children.

When asked what would make the service better, parents told us:

"Going to the park more often."

"More outdoor play, not just the garden but away from the nursery setting."

The new owners had made temporary improvements to the nappy-changing area. Other planned improvements included adding a staff room and a new office.

Procedures to help reduce the spread of infection and help keep children and staff safe were in place. Staff had undertaken infection prevention and control training. This meant staff were confident that the environment was safe for the children and staff. We found the service had a written cleaning schedule and robust maintenance records. This helped management and staff ensure that all areas used by children were being cleaned and maintained to the highest standards. It also supported good infection prevention and control practices.

Risk assessment procedures were in place. Staff undertook daily checks of the building and outdoor areas. This approach helped support staff to show how they had identified and removed or reduced risks to children while attending the service.

The service was registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), which helped ensure that the information it held was managed in accordance with general data protection requirements.

## Areas for improvement

1. The management and staff should continue to develop and improve the range of toys and equipment on offer to the children to help enhance their play experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open-ended and natural materials" (HSCS 1.31).

We evaluated this key question as good, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a positive impact on children's experiences.

### Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

We found that the manager and the new operations director had formed a good working partnership. They were both motivated, enthusiastic, skilled and knowledgeable. The manager confirmed that the recent provider change had been positive. The operations director had consulted with her, the wider staff team and parents, to identify the resources needed to improve the nursery.

The manager shared with us their plans and quality assurance processes. These helped her evaluate and improve the outcomes for the children, families and staff. She had drawn up plans that identified three key areas for improvement for 2024/2025. These included the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) - a rights-based approach for children, the environment and literacy. The manager was realistic and acknowledged that the evaluation and improvement plans were a work in progress. She was clear that the service was on an improvement journey.

The manager shared with us the improvements that had been made to the service since the change of directors. She was fully committed to, and understood, the importance of ensuring that staff, families and children participated in, and influenced, the ongoing nursery improvements. The management had put in place various ways to get their feedback and ideas. We looked at how this was being recorded and monitored, and we could see that it was linked to the ongoing quality assurance processes. This approach helped the management and staff implement the service's vision, values and aims, and continued to support the needs of the children, families and staff.

A parent told us: "Opportunities to join in nursery events. Learning journals used to update weekly as well as parent nights and forums. Generally the staff are always flexible to answer any questions etc when approached despite being busy."

The manager encouraged an ethos where staff felt empowered to share responsibility for the development and improvement of the service. She was keen to develop a more devolved leadership across the staff team. This approach would enable the staff to have greater input into how the nursery operated and encourage them to take responsibility for different areas of the nursery. To support the staff, we found that the manager had begun to put in place protected time to enable staff to spend quality time on their own learning and development.

Staff sought and encouraged children to voice their opinions on the types of play and activities they would like to take part in. For example, using one-to-one and group discussions and observations of the younger children and babies. This feedback helped staff plan future activities and ensured that children were involved in, and influenced, what happened within the nursery. Staff were flexible, kind and responsive to the children's needs and wishes and had formed warm, nurturing bonds with them. The children had fun, bonded with the staff, made friends and enjoyed the activities.

Feedback from parents told us that management and staff were supportive of their children and met their ongoing needs. This meant the children felt cared for and secure when they were at the nursery.



A parent commented: "The staff are caring and brilliant with the children. They know them all well and focus on their development. My [child] has done so well since they started in the nursery, and I recommend it to everyone. Each of the staff members should be highly commended. The manager is also great, she is approachable, always friendly and also knows each of the children, which is reassuring and means she is child focussed."

## How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a positive impact on children's experiences.

### Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

We found that there was sufficient staff to meet the wellbeing needs of the children attending the service and to keep them safe. The deployment of the core staff (staff who permanently worked at the service) ensured that the children had good continuity of care over the day. On the days we visited, the core staff were being supported by agency staff. As part of the nursery improvement, the operations director planned to reduce the use of agency staff and increase the permanent staff.

Children and their families experienced a warm, kind, caring and nurturing setting. Very good relationships and effective communication were established between staff and parents. We found that staff worked well together, and they were respectful in their interactions with each other. This helped create a positive team ethos and ensured that the staff were good role models for the children. Staff were compassionate and respectful in their engagements with children and each other. They were invested in children's development. We observed staff praising, encouraging and celebrating children's achievements during our inspection. The atmosphere was relaxed, and there was lots of laughter, cuddles and kindness.

Parents' comments included:

"The relationship my child has built with the staff and classmates, it has been very special to see. The smaller classes allow my child to get to know their classmates better."

"The staff are amazing, we are always made to feel welcome as a family and feel confident all staff know our child well, not just their key worker or the staff in their room."

Staff were skilled in their roles and worked together as a team to support the children's play and learning. Staff were keen to continue to develop their practice and told us about the recent training they had attended and how this had improved their practice and enhanced the children's play experiences.

Overall, we found that parents were very happy or happy with the staff team and the care their children received.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very 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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