

Thrive Childcare and Education Dundee Nature Kindergarten Day Care of Children

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Unannounced

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Service provided by:
Thrive Childcare and Education
Limited

Service provider number:
SP2003002955

Service no:
CS2014324854

About the service

Thrive Childcare and Education Dundee Nature Kindergarten is a day care of children service. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 117 children at any one time, age from 0 to an age to attend primary school for full days, of whom no more than 36 may be under 2 years of age. The service has access to their own building, which contains various play and learning spaces, kitchen, snack facilities and access to a large, enclosed garden space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place from 23 to 25 July 2024. Two inspectors carried out the inspection.

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 and received feedback from 36 families;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and children's experiences; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy and engaged in their play and learning during our visit. We observed staff to be caring and warm towards children.
- Management understood the benefits of working with outside agencies and had created positive relationships with external professionals.
- We encouraged management to continue the progression around their approach to planning and monitoring of children's play and learning.
- Areas across the setting would benefit from some renovation which management recognised and had started to address.
- A trained forest school leader supported children to risk take, learn about nature and develop fine motor skills through a range of outdoor activities.
- A more formal approach to self evaluation across the setting should be developed to include regular auditing and monitoring.

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 and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff were warm, friendly and caring towards children. Children were provided with cuddles and reassurance which supported them to feel safe. For example, babies were cuddled, comforted and had secure attachments with staff. Comments from families included "Staff are very welcoming and it is clear that they take a real interest in each child", "Staff are extremely caring" and "My child and her keyworker, XXX, have a lovely relationship, my child calls them her friend".

Management understood the benefits of working with outside agencies and had created positive links with several of them. For example, speech and language therapists, educational psychologist and health visitors. This supported continuity of care.

Personal plans were in place and gathered helpful information that could support children's care, play and learning. Chronologies for recording key events included key dates and outcomes. This supported management to have an overview of significant events in a child's life. Staff knew children well and were aware of tailored support needs. We highlighted the importance of ensuring all personal plan information was reviewed at a minimum of six months. One parent told us "When my child first started, I met with nursery staff to go through their personal plan and it felt thorough and helpful."

Staff were able to share children's medical needs and allergies. Consent forms and administration forms were in place and medication was safely stored. Some consent forms sampled had not been reviewed in the same way as some of the fuller health care plans. For example, one consent form had conflicting information which could have led to confusion around the dosage of medication, however management acted at the time of inspection to address this.

Snack and the meal spaces took account the age and stage of children. Overall staff were alert and supervised children during lunch and snack. Opportunities for children to be independent were provided as children self-served their food and, in some rooms, prepared snacks. We discussed how this approach could be provided to younger children to extend independence and life skill opportunities across the setting.

The approach to safe sleep was well considered. Sleep spaces had been created and took account safe sleep guidance. Children were checked on at regular intervals, fitted clean sheets were applied to sleep mats, and staff soothed and sang to children. The sensitive and nurturing approach supported children's comfort, security and safety. One staff member told us "I believe the setting is safe as we follow the right protocols".

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were observed to be busy, engaged and having fun within their play and learning. Activities included visits to the forest, gloop making which required measuring, mixing and turn taking and stories and songs being sung and read. Staff used open ended questions to support children's interests and promote learning and development. One parent told us "My child does a lot at this nursery - colouring and painting, lots of messy play, water play, loves the construction area and they absolutely adore the garden".

Resources and toys included paper, pencils and chalk, to encourage children's early writing skills and opportunities to mark make through the use of paints, foam bubbles and sand trays.

Staff told us that planning for play and learning consisted of a mixture of planned and spontaneous activities. Play, learning, children's interests and experiences were captured through photos, mind maps, floor books and digital learning platforms. However, information was not always clear or consistent. For example, the recording of progress, achievements, dates and next steps within floor books were inconsistent and the standard of observations within digital learning platforms were limited.

The overall approach to planning varied across rooms and parents shared with us "There are some generic messages shared on Parent Zone however no regular updates of my child's learning progress", "Observations were shared on the app however this no longer happens" and "I would appreciate some sort of update on my child's progress linked to the curriculum to see where the nursery feels my child's strengths are and where they require support".

To ensure regular high quality play and learning is offered and to support children reach their full potential, we encouraged management to continue working with the provider and Local Authority around their approach to planning and monitoring of children's play and learning.

Parents were able to enter the service daily at drop off, collection time and through planned events. For example, forest school activities. This promoted parental involvement and helped build and sustain positive relationships between parents and staff. Parents shared "My child is very excited to go to forest school every Tuesday and learn with XXX about nature" and "Forest school has been a huge hit for my child and I was lucky enough to go to a parent session a few weeks ago and it was brilliant to see all the opportunities the children get".

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 benefited from a purpose built, safe and welcoming environment. There was plenty of natural light and ventilation across the setting. Rooms and areas had been set up to consider the stages of child development. For example, babies had opportunities to move freely, push, pull and explore sensory toys, and children within 3-5's could climb, balance and be creative with playdough. We encouraged management to continue making the environment more homely and inviting to create a relaxed play and learning space throughout the setting.

Areas across the service would benefit from being refreshed. For example, walls had various marks, scribbles and chipped paintwork. Some sink sealants were dirty and impaired. We highlighted the need for the service to consider how to ensure children access a high quality environment. By the time of writing the report, planned refurbishment had begun.

The approach to nappy changing was warm, caring and nurturing to support children's security and confidence. However, nappy changing spaces required further consideration to ensure they were in line with current guidance. For example, we identified a lack of hand washing sinks, bins for general waste and fans not operating. We signposted management to 'Nappy changing for early learning and childcare settings (excluding childminders)'.

The garden spaces were secure and took account sun safety. For example, there was plenty of shelter and shade and staff were observed applying sun cream and providing drinks to children. This supported, health, wellbeing and rehydration.

Direct access from playrooms downstairs to outdoors helped support children to make choices about where to play. The outdoors offered opportunities for fresh air and exploration. For example, children benefited from a forest area and a trained Forest School leader who supported children to risk take, learn about nature and develop fine motor skills through a range of activities. Families who responded to our survey told us that their child could play outdoors always or very often. Some of their comments included:

'My child thoroughly enjoys the 'mud patch' and exploring through water play and climbing.'

'Forest school has been a great addition to the nursery.'

'My child goes to forest school which he loves. He gets to help with the fire, wheelbarrowing, foraging to a degree and in general exploratory play. He really thrives here.'

Children and staff washed their hands at appropriate times throughout the day and staff used Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which helped ensure children were safe and healthy. We highlighted some concerns around the service's approach to Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) on the first day of inspection. For example, not all toilet spaces were clean. However, action was taken by management and we noted improvements on day two of inspection.

Information about children was kept securely and took account confidentiality and the safe storage of data.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The leadership team engaged well during the inspection process and were reflective throughout. This demonstrated an ethos of commitment and willingness for continuous improvement.

A shared vision, values and aims were in place and included 'children first every time'. We encouraged at the next review for children, families and staff to be involved in the reviewing and development of these. This would ensure a clear vision for all.

Children's voice informed their daily experiences to ensure they had ownership of the setting. Families shared with us that each child is treated as an individual and the staff have a person-centred approach.

Self evaluation and quality assurances processes were in place. However, management had been unable to keep up to date with this due to other challenges within the service. For example, working with agencies, managing sickness and supporting staff practice. We provided suggestions on how management could address key areas. For example, using effective action plans to track ongoing tasks.

We outlined how management should formalise their approach to self evaluation across the setting to include regular auditing and monitoring. For example, evaluation of service using best practice documents should be considered. We also encouraged management to develop systems with the impact being monitored. For example, around the monitoring of staff practice, environment, resources and learning to ensure it leads to sustained improvements. We signposted the service to the Care Inspectorate document 'Self-evaluation for improvement - your guide' to support this area.

Accidents and incidents were recorded, and the service had a system in place to log, share and monitor accidents and incidents. We encouraged management to build on the approach to auditing around these to prevent reoccurrence and support learning.

Safer recruitment guidance had been followed to ensure people with the right skills and values worked within the service. Management had begun developing a new induction programme based on the 'Early Learning and Childcare: National Induction Resource. (Scottish Government, 2023)'. This was at the early stage and the impact could not be fully assessed at the time of inspection.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff engaged well in the inspection process and were open and honest during our discussions. There was a range of skills and experiences within the team to support children. Staff were welcoming and engaged positively with children and families. This demonstrated families were respected and valued. Families shared with us:

"There is always a member of staff available to give a good handover at pick-up time".

"When I drop off and pick up, the environments are calm and there is always a member of staff to physically hand my child to".

We discussed with management the importance of staff deployment. For example, within 3-5 areas there were missed opportunities to enhance play and learning experiences for children. We encouraged management to ensure sufficient staff was deployed to consider needs, spaces and supervision across 3-5's areas. We acknowledged additional staff was available on the second day of inspection which improved outcomes for children.

We sampled some 1-1 meeting records which offered focussed discussion for individual staff about their work and professional development needs. When asked what the service could do better, staff comments included:

"Improved focus on developing staff as professional individuals."

"Increased allocated time for personal learning planning and observations".

We encouraged management to review the approach to 1-1 meetings to ensure staff feel fully supported.

Staff shared they did not always reflect on learning and training. Moving forward, the team needed to ensure that after future training, staff evaluate and reflect on their learning to fully integrate new knowledge and skills. This would enhance the effectiveness and highlight the benefits of training to support the improvement ethos in the setting.

Children's key information was accessible to staff so they could maintain consistent care across the setting. Absence was considered using regular relief staff and support from management. This minimised disruption to the service and delivery of care.

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 service must have an effective system in place to monitor how staff know, understand and respond best to support every child's need consistently.

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

'I use a service that is well led and managed.' (HSCS 4.23);

'If I have a carer, their needs are assessed and support provided.' (HSCS 4.26); and

'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources.' (HSCS 4.27).

This area for improvement was made on 13 December 2019.

Action taken since then

We were satisfied that the service had taken steps to monitor staff practice and had put systems in place for quality assurance. Links have also been established with key agencies to support children's tailored care needs. There are still key areas that need strengthening; however, we are satisfied management will progress these. This recommendation has now 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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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