

Thrive Childcare and Education Happitots Inverkip Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 July 2024

Service provided by:
Enchanted Forest Nursery (Inverkip)
Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2012011768

Service no:
CS2011305898

About the service

Thrive Childcare and Education Happitots Inverkip is provided by Enchanted Forest Nursery (Inverkip) Ltd. The service operates from the first floor of a two storey building in the Inverkip area of Inverclyde. The service is registered to care for a maximum of 62 children within the following age ranges:

- no more than 20 are aged under 2 years
- no more than 20 are aged 2 years to under 3 years
- no more than 22 are aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service has partnership status with Inverclyde Council to provide commissioned places for some children. At the time of our inspection, 69 children were registered with the service.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 24 and 25 July 2024. The inspection was carried out by three 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:

- spoke with people using the service and consulted their family members using an electronic questionnaire
- spoke with almost all staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children had formed positive relationships as staff interactions were warm, caring and nurturing.
- Children's wellbeing was supported as the calm and respectful approach of staff helped them to feel secure.
- Children were actively involved in leading their play and were able to express their play choices.
- The provider and management team should review and improve the evacuation procedures to ensure it is clear what steps need to be taken in an emergency to enable all children to safely evacuate the premises.
- The provider and management team should review and improve their processes for working with partner agencies to meet children's individual needs.

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. We found several strengths that impacted positively on outcomes for children and outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced kind and compassionate care. Staff interactions respected children's rights and promoted their dignity. Children were happy, settled and approached staff for comfort, reassurance and cuddles. As a result of staffs' nurturing approach, children felt valued, safe and secure.

Staff were responsive to children's individual sleep and rest cues. Staff recognised when children were tired and provided individual comforters and opportunities to sleep and relax. Regular sleep checks were undertaken to ensure children's safety.

Children's wellbeing was supported by staff who knew them well and had formed positive relationships with families. The new management team had supported staff to ensure all children had a personal plan in place that contained relevant information. We discussed with management the importance of ensuring consistent reviews take place to ensure children's individual next steps and strategies are recorded within their plans. This would ensure that all children are supported to reach their full potential.

Children benefited from unhurried meal times where their independence was promoted. They were supported to self-serve foods, pour their own drinks and clear away after meals. Staff sat with children and chatted meaningfully about their day while role modelling positive eating habits. The calm environment supported children to develop life skills.

Where children had an identified additional support need, the management and staff team were not proactively consulting with partner agencies or recording minutes of meetings attended. This had resulted in missed opportunities to ensure all professionals were working towards a shared set of agreed goals to meet each child's needs. We have asked that the provider reviews their procedures for partnership working and provides relevant training for management and staff, to ensure they confidently implement a partnership approach to supporting children's care and developmental needs. This will ensure children receive the right care and support at the right time (see area for improvement 1).

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

We recognised that improvements had been made to the quality of resources available to children to ensure they could make informed choices about their play within a welcoming environment. Play materials were available in a way which supported children to express choice. In some playrooms, we observed children actively leading their own play and learning through a balance of spontaneous and planned experiences that promoted independence. There had been some changes within the staff team and management had recognised that some staff would benefit from more support to embed recent environmental changes. We encouraged the manager to continue with their plans to provide training and peer coaching as this would ensure all children were engaged in meaningful play and learning experiences throughout their day.

Children had fun whilst engaging in opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. We observed children choosing and listening to stories, singing songs, reading words and writing their name. However, some playrooms were better resourced for literacy and numeracy opportunities than others. The management team was in the process of developing a plan to provide rich numeracy and literacy experiences indoors and outdoors across the whole service. We encouraged the management team to continue with these plans as this would support children's attainment.

An online learning platform, Iconnect, supported learning and development to be shared with parents. However, we found that information was updated inconsistently, and we discussed with the management team how observations and assessments of learning could be further developed to ensure next steps are identified and tracked. The management team had been monitoring the use of Iconnect, however, this had not yet lead to improvements. The management team agreed that more consistent use of Iconnect would further support parents to be actively involved in their child's learning and confirmed this would remain a priority for improvement.

The service made satisfactory use of areas in the local community including the local multi use games area, the beach, the forest and Inverkip marina. However, we found that the quality of children's experiences whilst attending these areas, and the period of time children access outdoors could be further improved. We have suggested that the management team further monitor the quality of children's outdoor experiences to ensure all children access high quality experiences outdoors during each session. This will support children to develop meaningful connections with their wider community.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure all children experience care and support that meets their needs, the provider should review and improve their procedures for Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC). This should include providing management and staff with relevant training to ensure they fully understand the importance of a multi-agency approach to meeting children's needs. This will ensure that where children are supported by more than one organisation, they experience consistency within their care.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19) and 'If I am supported and cared for by a team or more than one organisation, this is well co-ordinated so that I experience consistency and continuity' (HSCS 4.17).

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a welcoming environment. The playrooms were bright and well-furnished with some rooms containing natural light. Indoor play spaces had been considered to provide comfortable areas for children to rest and relax. There was a calm and friendly ethos within the service and, as a result, children were happy and relaxed.

Cleaning schedules and risk assessments were in place and regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that any potential harm was minimised. Staff supervised children closely and responsively assessed risks which happened as the result of child-led play. Where children were at an appropriate stage to do so, some staff supported children to consider risks and identify how these could be minimised. This kept children safe and helped them develop life skills.

The current management team had supported staff to value the use of real, natural resources and loose parts. These are materials that do not have a specific purpose. This meant that most children experienced an environment that fostered creativity, imagination and discovery. Whilst resources were easily accessible throughout the setting, we observed that there were also some areas of the playrooms for children under three years old, that very few children chose to access. Staff should continue to ensure that the play spaces, provocations and invitations to play reflect children's interests. This would help to ensure that children consistently experience an environment that is exciting and stimulating.

Due to the layout of the building, free flow access to outdoors was not possible. Staff told us they were responsive to children's preferences when they chose to play outdoors. However, we found that this was not always happening and during our inspection some children's access to outdoors was limited. In addition, we discussed with the management team the need to revisit the access route to the garden space as this involved children passing through a busy shopping area rather than using an internal stairway with access to the garden. As part of this review process, the management team should also consider ways to ensure children's play is not interrupted when others may require personal care. Improving access to outdoors to ensure it is provided at times that meets children's preferences and needs will enhance their wellbeing.

Not all staff were clear on the procedures to be applied in the event of an emergency evacuation. This meant that there was the potential for younger children to receive a delay in evacuating the premises putting them at risk of harm. We have asked the provider and management team to review and improve the procedures for evacuating the premises in an emergency and to ensure all staff are clear on the revised procedures. The provider should also consider contingency arrangements should the management team be absent from the building to ensure children's safety at all times (see area for improvement 1). Prior to the publication of this inspection report, we received assurance that the provider had contacted the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service for assistance.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure the safety of visitors, staff and children, the provider should review and improve their emergency evacuation procedures. Any changes made to the current procedures should be shared with all staff. This will ensure the premises can be evacuated safely and promptly in an emergency.

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 5.19).

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 well led

The management team was newly recruited to the service. With support from the newly appointed regional manager, they engaged well with the inspection and demonstrated a positive attitude towards change and improvement. As the result of changes to the senior leadership team, we suggested that the service would benefit from revisiting vision, values and aims to ensure the service delivery captured the wishes and aspirations of management, staff, children and families.

The service was in the early stages of developing their self-evaluation processes. Recent team meetings provided opportunities for staff to share best practice guidance and supported them to be reflective in their practice. Staff told us that they informally discussed what was working well and what could be improved. We suggested using an evaluative framework such as the Care Inspectorate's, A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare as this would help focus their self-evaluation and add depth to their reflections. In addition, to further support staff to be more involved in the improvement journey of the service, it would be beneficial to improve the recordings of discussions and agreed actions resulting from any meetings. This would ensure that any next steps are revisited and would ensure staff have ownership of some service improvements. This supports a shared vision of improvement for the service.

The monitoring processes in place considered staff practice, best practice guidance and the environment for children. This had led to some improvements in children's play and learning environments. Staff at all levels were involved using peer assessments and audit tools. Further improvements could be made to the formal auditing procedures to ensure where areas for improvement had been identified, these are consistently revisited to support positive outcomes for children and families.

We issued the manager of the service with a Microsoft Forms questionnaire to share with families who attended the service. Of those who responded, half strongly disagreed that, 'My child and I are involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service'. Some areas parents suggested that they would like to see improvements included communication from management, information on how their child is achieving developmentally, more frequent use of the online platform Iconnect and for their child to spend more time outdoors. The current management team had considered these areas and had introduced a development plan to enable them to make improvements. We encouraged the team to share this with parents and to ensure parents are kept informed of any progress made. This will allow families to feel included in the development of the service.

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 communicated well with each other to limit disruption to children's care. Staff recorded personal care routines promptly, telephones were used to seek support from the garden area and communication diaries were used to share key details. This ensured that all staff had the necessary information to meet children's daily care needs.

Some parents spoke positively of the relationships they had developed with staff. Comments included, 'I like that my child feels comfortable with the staff who look after them' and 'We have built good relationships with staff since my child joined the nursery'. This told us that where staff had remained consistent for children, positive relationships had been formed.

All staff told us they felt supported by the newly appointed management team, who they found to be approachable. Staff had regular professional development review meetings where they discussed aspects of their role, including training opportunities, personal wellbeing and areas of practice to further develop. This enabled staff to feel supported within their role.

Staff benefited from regular opportunities to meet with management as a whole staff team. This supported good communication across the team and ensured that all staff felt valued and included. There was a mixture of staff experience, knowledge and skills in the team. Staff were keen to support each other's professional development and spoke positively of their colleagues' strengths. This helped staff to work collaboratively and learn from each other to promote positive outcomes for children and families.

Staff champion roles were not consistently embedded, and as a result, were not improving experiences for children. We encouraged the management team to continue with their plans to re-establish champion roles linked to staff knowledge and skills. The management team should source appropriate training for staff relating to their allocated role and monitor the impact of these roles on experiences for children. This will ensure leadership opportunities develop staff skills and support positive experiences and improved outcomes for children and families.

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 ensure all children experience calm, unhurried positive mealtimes, the management team and staff should review the lunch time experience and make necessary improvements. At a minimum, improvements should include;

- a) Review organisational and national meal time guidance with staff. This should include NHS Health Scotland's guidance, Setting the table, nutritional guidance and food standards for early years childcare providers in Scotland.
- b) Ensure staff sit with children to promote social interaction and to ensure staff are well placed should a choking episode occur.
- c) Ensure drinking water is available and easily accessible at all times throughout the day.
- d) Ensure staff have access to appropriate food preparation space to ensure children's meal plates are not placed on the floor. This will prevent the likelihood of bacteria spreading.
- e) Increase opportunities to support children's participation and independence during mealtimes.
- f) Management should monitor the quality of meal times to ensure a positive experience is consistent for all children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed environment as possible' (HSCS 1.35).

This area for improvement was made on 22 November 2022.

Action taken since then

We observed snack and lunch experiences for children and reviewed sufficient evidence to demonstrate that this area for improvement had been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To protect children's privacy and dignity at all times, the management team and staff should ensure that children's clothing is not removed for the purpose of creative play and that when children do require to have their clothing removed for the purpose of personal care, this is carried out within an appropriate private space.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'If I require intimate personal care, this is carried out in a dignified way, with my privacy and personal preferences respected' (HSCS 1.4).

This area for improvement was made on 22 November 2022.

Action taken since then

We observed interactions between staff and children, observed personal care routines and reviewed sufficient evidence to demonstrate that this area for improvement had 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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