

Little Hawthorn Loanhead Day Care of Children

16 Hawthorn Gardens
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Telephone: 01314 403 057

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
26 February 2025

Service provided by:
Natalie Hollerin

Service provider number:
SP2005007217

Service no:
CS2005088311

About the service

Little Hawthorn Loanhead is an early learning and childcare setting situated in Midlothian close to transport links, shops and community services. The service provides a daycare of children service to a maximum of 36 children aged birth to five years.

Children are cared for in playrooms on the ground floor of the detached building and a sleep room is situated upstairs. There is a large enclosed garden to the rear of the building, with a separate area for the younger children. There are toilets, nappy changing facilities, kitchen and an office.

The service has a partnership agreement with Midlothian Council to provide funded early learning and childcare.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 18 February 2025 between the hours of 9:00 and 16:00. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with most of the children using the service and three of their parents
- spoke with all staff and management
- observed practice and daily routines
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children benefitted from being cared for by kind and committed staff.
- Support plans and chronologies ensured that children's welfare, wellbeing and development were promoted.
- Planning and play experiences positively impacted on children's play and learning.
- The manager provided clear leadership and supported self-evaluation and quality assurance.
- The provider should review maintenance and safety of the setting.

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?	3 - Adequate
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

Strong relationships had been developed between staff and children. This was confirmed by a parent who told us staff "know my child well". Through their warm and caring interactions, staff not only fostered a sense of security and confidence but also actively promoted the building of meaningful relationships among the children. The genuine love shown by the staff was evident by visibly happy children.

Children received praise, encouragement, cuddles, and reassurance as needed from staff, fostering a sense of love and nurture that supported their overall wellbeing. Staff viewed daily routines as learning opportunities and actively involved children in tasks such as setting up tables for meals and assisting with tidying up. As a result this promoted responsibility, independence, and a sense of belonging for children.

Children appeared familiar with the rolling lunch routine in each room. Their confidence, independence and life skills were promoted through the mostly unhurried experience. We asked the service to review meal time experiences for the pre school children so all children received the same experience. We also asked the service to review how meals were presented to the younger children in order to promote further independence. Meals were prepared on the premises and menus shared with parents and children were given a good range of healthy snacks which they helped to prepare. All dietary requirements were met which meant children were kept safe and healthy.

Staff took time to listen to children. Their positive body language, tone of voice and facial expressions sent the message to children that they were being listened to, and their voice mattered. Children were praised and encouraged, children were offered kindness and reassurance when needed, this supported them to feel safe, confident, nurtured.

We sampled personal plans and saw that keyworker staff created these with parents and captured children's needs, interests, and preferences using the wellbeing indicators. The plans gave examples of partnership working with families to promote children's needs and interests. However, some of these needed updating and staff told us they continued to encourage parents to review current information.

Transitions into the setting were planned and documented to ensure essential information was shared, promoting children's security and wellbeing. Chronologies and pastoral notes recorded any changes in a child's life, which supported the staff team to meet current needs and promote positive outcomes for children.

Children were able to sleep and have quiet times if they wished. The sleep room was upstairs and children were familiar with routines. The new sleep policy and monitoring system promoted children's safety and was effective. We asked staff to reflect on the time given to younger children after their sleep. Older children were able to have a sleep or rest in designated areas of the playroom.

Medication was stored securely in the office and all records were up to date. This meant children were kept safe.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Play spaces and experiences indoors and outdoors promoted learning and engagement. One parent of a pre school child told us they were "delighted" with how well their child was progressing at nursery. Some children chose to spend a sustained amount of time in the garden. We saw a group of children having fun pretending to be at a camp fire in the mud digging pit. This meant outdoor play experiences were central to promoting children's health and wellbeing

Intentional and responsive planning was evidenced within floor books and displayed on planning sheets. Online systems and daily chats were used to update parents on their child's development, interests, and experiences within the setting. This was confirmed by one parent who told us "I get to see all things my child has been doing at nursery and I like that". We suggested floor books could be shared with parents allowing them to see children's experiences and learning.

From the sample of observations we looked at a more consistent approach to recording would support the progress of any next steps. More work was needed to enhance the quality and timeliness of observations, supporting more informed and responsive care to meet each child's needs and interests. Staff had the capacity to take this forward.

We observed children transporting resources around the spaces to lead their own play. As a result, children were busy and engaged in play for long periods of time as they extended interests and developed their own ideas. Staff placed the needs and interests of children at the centre of activities and experiences. For example, recognising that some children were hesitant to try new things and staff spent time with them at their level and helped support their confidence and skills.

Staff listened to children and understood the positive impact open ended resources and materials had on children's imagination and creativity. We asked staff to reflect on the pace of the day as sometimes children's play was interrupted and stopped for group times and getting ready for lunch. We shared the Voice of the Infant best practice guidelines with the manager. On our return feedback visit we saw staff had been proactive and taken onboard the principles of these guidelines and reviewed the spaces in playrooms. Staff told us this had had a positive affect on outcomes for children's wellbeing.

Staff were skilful in knowing when to step back from play and join in again to support children. They listened to children's needs and wishes and supported their overall wellbeing and sense of belonging. Children enjoyed real life experiences including preparing snack, visiting a local pet shop and wooded area. As a result children were able to explore and learn about the world around them.

Children's skills in language, literacy, and numeracy was promoted as the environment promoted numeracy and literacy. This fostered deeper engagement, sparked children's imagination, and enriched their play and learning.

How good is our setting?

3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a nursery environment that was well furnished, comfortable and homely. They were

confident moving around the nursery. This showed us they felt safe and secure. The use of displays and children's work, promoted discussion and encouraged children to re-visit their learning experiences. We asked the manager to review displays and resources in the younger children's playrooms. On our second feedback visit to the setting staff had taken on board our suggestions and both playrooms were better organised.

Indoor spaces were safe, secure, and provided developmentally appropriate spaces. As a result, children experienced an environment tailored to develop their natural curiosities and provided a calm and fun play space. Staff were responsible for ensuring children were kept healthy and safe during their time in nursery.

Outdoor spaces were a work in progress as detailed in the nursery improvement plan. Staff worked well together to address some of the outdoor issues. We saw a maintenance list however, on our visit we highlighted a number of areas in need of immediate improvement which had not been identified on the list. This included broken fencing, trip hazards in the small garden and, leaking sewage pipe. On our feedback visit all the hazards we identified had been addressed and made safe. The decking area was an ongoing issue which the setting was aware of and this was a work in progress. (see area for improvement 1)

Children were confident moving around the nursery. This showed us they felt safe and secure. The supervised outdoor spaces offered children ample space to be active and have fun. These were appropriately resourced and offered children sheltered play whilst benefitting from being outside in the fresh air.

Toilets and nappy changing facilities were kept clean throughout the day and promoted children's wellbeing. Staff should continue to ensure the respect and dignity of all children as they reviewed changing arrangements. On our suggestion the manager made signs for the changing areas to alert staff they were currently in use.

Staff and children were involved in risk assessing the indoor and outdoor spaces. This gave them a sense of responsibility in caring for their environment and keeping themselves safe. Children were encouraged to look after the environment and resources.

Staff had a good understanding of confidentiality and this was reflected in their communication with parents. Children's information such as care plans and registration information were kept securely. Sensitive information was only shared with those who needed the information to meet children's needs. This meant, protection of children's information complied with relevant best practice.

Infection prevention control measures were in place to ensure consistent approaches to health and safety across the nursery. Staff positively reinforced the need for good hygiene with children by offering words of encouragement and role modelling good handwashing practice.

Areas for improvement

1. The provider should review maintenance and safety of the setting. This should include reviewing environmental monitoring procedures, making sure the decking areas are safe, reviewing outdoor resources and equipment, and risk assessments are kept up to date.

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

'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment (HSCS 5.24)

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 improvements are led well

Management and senior staff had a vision of where they wanted to be and how they were going to get there. A culture of continuous improvement was clear. The improvement plan detailed the vision, values and aims of the setting. Staff recognised they were on a journey and we could see the work both they had put into self evaluating and reflecting on their practice. They had the capacity to move this forward.

Monitoring and auditing of the environment, processes and practice were evaluated to ensure they were effective. Moving forward, further monitoring of the outdoor environment was needed to promote children's safety and wellbeing. (refer to the area for improvement 1 under Quality Indicator 2.2)

Staff training and reflective conversations had clearly had a positive impact, contributing to improvements in the setting. Moving forward, the manager needed to ensure that in a timely manner after any future training, staff evaluate and reflect on their learning to fully integrate new knowledge and skills, enhancing the effectiveness and benefits of training. This would help further support the improvement ethos in the setting.

We saw that parents were warmly welcomed into the setting. Questionnaires and daily verbal discussions encouraged parents to get involved in service development. This led to an inclusive environment.

Regular whole team meetings and development of roles enabled staff to take responsibility and be accountable for the quality of the setting. We suggested developing champion roles within the setting could promote improvements.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff recognised the importance of nurturing and warm interactions so that children experienced genuine love and care. Parents were complimentary of the staff team and the way in which they cared for their child. One parent told us "This nursery is ace and all the staff are lovely and friendly". This reflected a nurturing care and support approach from staff.

Staffing was within adult child ratios. The manager recognised that although ratios were always met they recognised sometimes it could feel a bit stretched. Staffing arrangements promoted continuity of care as much as possible, contributing to supportive environments for children. Staff told us "We are always staffed and if we need more support we can count on each other or management to help" and "Each room is in numbers and have enough staff to leave room and do things such as changing a nappy".

Good use was made of staff's differing skills and knowledge ensuring that children could experience positive and safe environments throughout the day. This commitment to staffing, continuity and adequate ratios

helped ensure children experienced a secure and nurturing environment, whilst enhancing peace of mind for families.

Staff communicated well across the spaces to ensure that they were all working together to best meet the needs of children, for example, staff informed each other and children as they were about to leave play areas. One staff told us "We are a strong team and look out for each other". This supported positive relationships as children were reassured as to where key members of staff were and when they would return.

Staff were proud of the work they did. This contributed to the positive atmosphere that children and families experienced. Moving forward, management should continue to support staff to develop their skills and knowledge, further promoting positive outcomes for children. This would continue to build staff confidence in their role and further enhance children's care, play and learning.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 12 December 2024, the provider must ensure that children are effectively supported and supervised in order to keep them safe, secure, and protected from harm. In order to achieve this, the provider must, at a minimum ensure that:

- a) At all times suitably qualified, competent, experienced, and knowledgeable staff are working in the care service in such numbers as are appropriate to meet the health, welfare, and safety needs of all children.
- b) Staff are deployed to support children effectively at all times.
- c) Children are effectively supervised in line with all policies and procedure for example, the sleep policy.

To be completed by: 12 December 2024

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard 4.11: I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.

This is in order to comply with: Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210)

This requirement was made on 22 October 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

At all times suitably qualified, competent, experienced and knowledgeable staff were working in the setting.

Staff were deployed effectively to meet children's needs.

A new sleep policy had been written and implemented. A new sleep monitoring system was in place and was working effectively.

This requirement had been met.

Met - within timescales

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 review general cleaning practice within the nursery. In addition they should make sure the decking areas are safe for the children to use, to reduce the amount of accident in this area.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: '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 4 December 2023.

Action taken since then

The nursery was clean and this area of the improvement has been met.

This area for improvement has partially been met. The decking area still needs reviewing. Please refer to area for improvement 1 under Quality Indicator 2.2.

Previous area for improvement 2

The provider should continue to review nappy changing facilities meet the required standards and good practice is being followed. This to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'If I require intimate personal care, there is a suitable area for this, including a sink if needed

(HSCS 5.4) 'The premises have been adapted, equipped and furnished to meet my needs and wishes' (HSCS 5.18)

This area for improvement was made on 4 December 2023.

Action taken since then

Nappy changing facilities meet required standards and good practice is being followed.

Service acted promptly about adding signs to alert staff changing in progress to ensure children's dignity.

This area for improvement had been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The provider should carry out regular professional developmental reviews with the manager in order to support their personal development. The provider should support the manager and staff team through nursery changes, and have a clear oversight of quality assurance, to support improvement.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed. (HSCS 4.23)

This area for improvement was made on 4 December 2023.

Action taken since then

The provider has carried out professional developmental reviews with the manager. Moving forward minutes should be taken and shared with the manager in a timely manner to support her meet her goals and move forward with support/areas identified.

This area for improvement had been met.

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?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
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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