

Pinocchio's @ Heriot Watt Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
27 February 2025

Service provided by:
Pinocchio's Children's Nursery Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2003002984

Service no:
CS2003046419

About the service

Pinocchio's @ Heriot Watt is located in the grounds of Heriot Watt University (Riccarton Campus), Edinburgh. It is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 79 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. No more than 20 are aged under 2 years. The service may be provided as follows: a maximum of 55 children may be cared for in the main nursery building. A maximum of 24 children aged between 3 years and primary school entry may be cared for from the woodlands classroom.

The nursery operates from self-contained accommodation comprising of five playrooms, changing and toilet facilities and an enclosed garden area. There is also a woodland site that children can attend, with its own entrance, fixed shelter and toilet area all within the grounds of the nursery.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26 February 2025 between 09:00 and 17:00 hours. 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, 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.
- considered feedback from 18 families through an online questionnaire
- considered feedback from staff throughout the inspection and an online questionnaire
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents relating to the care of children and the management of the service.

Key messages

- Children's overall wellbeing was being supported by the warm and caring approaches of the staff who took time to listen to children.
- Improvements to the mealtime experience meant children were supported to eat in a calm and nurturing environment.
- Children had fun as they experienced good quality play, learning and development opportunities.
- The woodland area was a strength in the service, children spent time outdoors having fun and engaging in good play experiences.
- Effective and consistent leadership ensured children and families received quality care and support.
- Children's next steps should be reviewed regularly and more specific to support children's progress.

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.

1.1 - Nurturing Care and Support

Children were happy, having fun and confident within the service. Staff and children had positive interactions and staff showed children respect. Children interacted well together and told us about their friends and favourite activities. This gave children a sense of belonging which positively impacted on wellbeing. Families told us "the practitioners are very nurturing and caring" and "my child is happy and safe at this service" and another stated their children were happy to attend the setting.

Children's wellbeing was supported through the use of personal planning. Information was recorded in "All about me" forms, individual care plans and on the "my family" app. Care plans were of a better standard with most reflecting individualised information about children's support and development needs. Children who required additional support had strategies recorded and these were regularly evaluated to ensure support was relevant and up to date. Information was regularly but informally reviewed with parents, ensuring it was up to date, however, some families commented that they did not know their child had a personal plan. Some information recorded within the personal plans did not reflect best practice guidelines. Leaders have agreed to continue monitoring and formally reviewing plans with families.

Improvements had been made to the mealtime experience, which were now relaxed and unhurried. Opportunities for independence were promoted with children helping themselves, clearing their plates and pouring their own drinks. Menu's followed healthy choices and children's own individual dietary needs and preferences were well considered. To further support children experiences staff should consider the appropriateness of gather time before lunch, especially for the younger children.

Medication was stored safely and appropriate forms were in place to support the safe administration of children's prescribed medication. To further support children's safety the manager should update their auditing system to ensure medication is formally reviewed every three months as per guidance. However, the requirement made at the last inspection around medication was met.

Children's emotional wellbeing was mostly well considered. Staff had a good understanding of safe sleeping guidance and ensured that children's individual routines were respected. This meant that children were supported to rest and relax, promoting their wellbeing.

1.3 - Play and learning

Children were engaged in their play and learning throughout the service. They were able to self-select materials and make decisions on how they could use these. They were transporting materials around the nursery being creative and investigated how they worked. Staff had made improvements to the play spaces giving children more access to materials that supported their natural curiosity to play and learn.

Improvements had been made to the resources and play opportunities within the woodland area. Children were confident and had lots of fun whilst learning about the natural environment and developing their sense of risk. Staff in this area were committed to improving the area and shared their ideas during the

inspection. Shelter areas had been set up and staff were sensible about warming children up if required. We have asked that the service consider adding sides to the shelter where children ate. This would provide further warmth and comfort. Parent shared positive feedback about the woodland experience this included "The woodlands has been brilliant for our child. They absolutely love being outside and playing in nature. They also regularly take the kids around campus for walks and to feed the ducks. There's always a huge variety of things they do each week from messy play to drawing & painting to story time and free play too" and "Our child LOVES being outdoors. They'd be in the woodlands every day if they could. They do loads of fun and exciting things like bug hunts, fires and going for walks". Further comments included "Within the woodlands they are fully involved in outdoors play including positive risk taking based exercises (eg tree climbing, bonfire). They are very child led and will help children create and build experiences based on interest" and "The Woodlands is excellent, it's a great chance for our child to be outside all day and be involved in imaginative play. The staff at the moment are all really friendly and caring and our children clearly have good bonds with them".

There was a mix of planned and spontaneous experiences that supported children to learn and develop through play. Staff were working hard to ensure these were documented in floor books. Intentional play was being promoted and planned for by using the tracker sheets provided by the local authority. The child's voice was being recorded through the planning and recordings within the floor books. The service should continue to develop staff's skills and confidence around planning for children's progress.

Further support was required around extending and progressing children's learning. The recording of children's observations and next steps lacked consistency and depth. A parent commented "My only slight gripe is sometimes the Family app isn't updated as often as we'd like but it's definitely getting better and it's really only a minor issue. It would be great to get more individual observations / reports on children. We used to get an annual report card but not sure if we have had one in the last year - although perhaps that is due imminently". However, leaders were aware of this and plan to support staff in recording quality observations, along with relevant next steps. They should also ensure staff were confident and skilled at challenging children's progress learning through skilled questioning. This would ensure children's learning and development was challenged.

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.

2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a setting that was welcoming. The rooms benefitted from natural light and ventilation. There were displays of children's artwork and photographs of them and their families, supporting children to feel valued.

Children had lots of space to freely move around indoors and outdoors. Furniture and resources were of a good standard and organised to promote free flow play. Staff were evaluating the play spaces to ensure they were promoting children's play and learning. We saw staff helping children to use resources in their own way to develop their play and match their own interests and intentions. This meant that children were having fun and fully engaged in the resources on offer.

We observed staff following infection prevention and control procedures to minimise the risk of the spread of infection. There was effective handwashing in place for children and adults throughout the session and at

key times, such as mealtimes and after playing outside. We asked the service to continue to monitor the cleanliness of the toilets and changing areas. This would further contribute to good levels of safety for children's health and wellbeing.

Children had the freedom to run around outdoors, develop their physical skills and be creative. The availability of open-ended resources enabled children to engage their imaginations, develop life skills and spark curiosity. As a result, children were motivated, engaged, confident and had fun. Future plans for the garden included replacing the Astroturf and painting the fences. This would create an environment that was safe and appealing to the children.

Staff had created some homely spaces for children to relax and feel safe and secure. We asked that the service continue to review these spaces and ensure they provide additional resources if children need a space for self-regulation.

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

Although the manager had only been in the position for a short time. It had created stability within the service. They demonstrated a strong vision for the service and clear ambition for the children, families and staff in the nursery. They had an awareness of the improvements that were needed and had identified a number of priorities within the service action plan. At times staff shortages meant that the manager was often required within staff ratio's and this had impacted on the pace at which the improvements could be made.

Self evaluation and quality assurance systems were in place and promoting good outcomes for children. For example, improvements had been made to the lunchtime routine and the quality of play and learning taking place. We acknowledged the improvements made to the woodland area. Further work around number of staffing, quality observations and next steps leading to children progressing in their learning was now needed. However, the manager had already identified these and created an action plan to move forward with the improvements.

Staff told us that they felt involved in developing the nursery, and they felt supported and valued as a result. They were committed to developing the service and this had been documented through room floor books. Staff were beginning to involve the children in these improvements. This showed children's ideas and suggestions were beginning to influence change.

The manager had focused on building the team, supporting staff relationships and creating a positive team ethos. This had a positive influence on staff and the team were more settled. The manager had plans to build staff capacity through reflecting on practice and identifying skills for leadership. Appraisals were in the process of being conducted and regular full staff meetings were organised. This gave management and staff opportunities to encourage discussion, share information and training opportunities to strengthen cohesion. Moving forward there should be a focus on developing a more comprehensive training plan for all staff.

All families commented through our questionnaire that they were happy with the service and that their children were progressing well. They spoke highly of the staff team and their relationships

with their children. Comments included "Posts about the day on the app give a feel for our child's engagement and are interesting and well-written" and "We get regular updates at pick-up from staff every day and family updates on activities are very nice to see".

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

The service was appropriately staffed, and ratios were met and maintained. However, there were times throughout the day that the senior leadership team worked within the playrooms to ensure ratio's were maintained. We acknowledged the difficulties around staff recruitment and the service had a plan in place to recruit a further two staff members. This would ensure children and staff were fully supported.

Deployment and staffing levels took account of the skills mix, routines and activities for children. We saw that staff were flexible and worked as a team to benefit children. This ensured that children's needs were addressed through delivery of good care. Management worked hard to build and support the staff team and staff told us that they were well supported by the manager and room leaders.

The manager communicated well with staff and were keen to build a strong staff team. Monthly team meetings provided staff with a support mechanism and opportunities to engage with the manager and each other. Senior staff modelled good practice by sharing play activities, promoting discussion and reflection.

Staff had participated in training such as first aid, food hygiene, child protection and safe sleep and had completed training evaluations. They had considered the Care Inspectorate's "Quality Framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare" and Education Scotland's "How good is our early learning and childcare" to help them to evaluate and improve practice. We discussed future training plans with the manager and encouraged them to support staff to access a range of training to increase their knowledge and skills.

Arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day and ensure positive transitions and communication with families. Senior staff and keyworkers were available to chat and exchange information with parents. Parents valued this and were complimentary about the staff. Comments included "Generally I would say we have a positive relationship with the staff and they take our feedback on board" and "Communication is strong from all team members but especially so in the Early learning room". Another commented "We feel welcomed into the nursery each time we come in to drop off / collect and that is from all staff members".

Staff communicated well with each other and worked together to ensure supervision and quality engagement with children across the day. We saw staff sharing information about children during the day and working together to support individual children. Staff were responsive to meeting the needs of children and worked hard to create a positive ethos. Consequently team morale was improving and staff told us they felt valued, appreciated and had a sense of belonging. This impacted positively on children's experiences.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By March 15 2024, the provider must ensure that children receive care and support that meets their needs. To achieve this, the provider must, as a minimum
Complete an audit of medication to ensure that the medication procedures were being consistently followed.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 5 of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11)

This requirement was made on 18 January 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

The manager has a clear auditing system to provide overview of medication on premises, expiry dates and children's medication plans.

Medication plans are signed and dated – however these need to be every three months. Manager agreed to get this sorted asap.

The medication is stored in sealed bags, in original packaging and is prescribed by a health care practitioner. A health care plan clearly shows the dosage, the signs and symptoms and what to do in an emergency. There are flow charts available for the children who may have a more violent reaction if the medication does not work.

Staff inform parents through family if they have given their child medication – this is not always acknowledged by the parent – asked staff to be aware of that.

Staff are aware where the medication is stored and it clean and tidy.

This requirement is 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

To support children's wellbeing, independence and opportunities for social interactions the manager should ensure that mealtimes are developed in line with current best practice.

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 meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible' (HSCS 1.35) and 'If I need help with eating and drinking, this is carried out in a dignified way and my personal preferences respected' (HSCS 1.34)

This area for improvement was made on 18 January 2024.

Action taken since then

Improvements had been made to the lunch time routine. Most children were supported and they enjoyed the meal provided. Children were provided with an alternative if they did not like the food.

Children had the opportunity to develop their independence skills and were familiar with washing their hands, helping themselves to the food and clearing away their dishes.

This area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To further support children's interests, development and learning, the manager and staff should continue to develop the environment and play spaces. Staff should evaluate the spaces to ensure the resources on offer provide opportunities that spark curiosity and reflect children's current interests. This would ensure children engage in more purposeful play and learning.

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

'As a child I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity.' (HSCS 2.27)

This area for improvement was made on 18 January 2024.

Action taken since then

Play spaces were more appealing and had plenty of resources for children to choose independently. Most children were happy and playing well, either individually or in small groups.

Resources were stored at children's height and staff had evaluated the environment to ensure children were involved in their play.

Planning and next steps were in place. Some further work is needed around next steps and observations.

These had not been updated for some time, but the manager was aware of this and planned to take this forward with staff.

This area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure children receive care in a safe environment, infection control procedures should be improved. Procedures for handwashing should be reviewed. The issues highlighted with the changing area should be addressed and an action plan submitted to the Care Inspectorate informing us of the timescales for these improvements to be carried out.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.22).

This area for improvement was made on 24 January 2024.

Action taken since then

Although no action plan was submitted improvements had been made infection prevention and control procedures.

Children were being supported to wash their hands before eating and after toileting. Children washed their hands regularly in the woodland area with warm water being topped up throughout the day, to ensure this was a pleasant experience for the children.

Staff washed their hands at appropriate times throughout the day. Staff need to be aware of the keeping the environment as clean as possible. This was discussed at feedback and reassurances provided by the leadership team.

This area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure the quality of children's experiences are improved, the provider should implement robust quality assurance processes, including self-evaluation, covering key areas of practice. This should include, but not be limited to, monitoring children's personal plans, children's play and learning experiences, monitoring of staff practice, and evaluating and improving the nursery as a whole.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes'. (HSCS 4.19)

This area for improvement was made on 18 January 2024.

Action taken since then

The manager had only been in post for a year but had begun an in-depth quality assurance and monitoring programme. This included monthly audits of medication, personal planning, lunch time and planning for play.

There were clear audits which included observations, action points and this was followed up. This was

having an impact on outcomes for children including a better lunch time experience, play environment and medication was clearly recorded.

This area for improvement is 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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