

# Tree House Early Care and Education Centre Day Care of Children

Bright Horizons at Robert Gordon's University  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Announced

**Completed on:**  
19 March 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Bright Horizons Family Solutions Ltd

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000319

**Service no:**  
CS2004057803

## About the service

Tree House Early Care and Education Centre is a day care of children service situated on the Robert Gordon University Campus within the Garthdee area of Aberdeen. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 99 children at any one time.

The age range of the children will be from zero to those not yet attending primary school as follows: A maximum of 34 children aged zero to under three years may be cared for in rooms one and two on the right-hand side of the nursery. A maximum of 65 children aged from two years to those not yet attending primary school may be cared for in rooms one and two on the left-hand side of the nursery. The service operates between the hours of 07:30 and 18:00, Monday to Friday.

The children are cared for in a modern purpose-built nursery. The service is close to local bus routes and has a secure car park that allows parents to drop-off and collect their children safely.

## About the inspection

This pilot inspection was a shared visit between Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland HM inspectors to test the 'Quality improvement framework for early learning and childcare sectors'. The pilot took place on 17, 18, and 19 March 2025. The pilot was carried out by one Care Inspectorate inspector and one HM inspector.

To prepare for the inspection, the Care Inspectorate reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

This inspection was part of a shared pilot. As this inspection was part of a pilot, no new evaluations (grades) have been awarded.

During the inspection, the Care Inspectorate:

- interacted with children using the service
- spoke with seven of their friends and family members
- received 17 completed questionnaires/survey responses (all types)
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Education Scotland will provide a high level summary of the meetings and discussions held between the HM inspector, senior leaders, stakeholders, and practitioners in the setting. This will not include evaluations and will not be published.

## Key messages

- Children were cared for by staff motivated and enthusiastic in their professional learning.
- Children were cared for by staff who worked well as a team.
- Children experienced nurturing and loving care.
- Children experienced positive snacks and mealtimes.
- Children's wellbeing was supported through effective personal planning.
- Strong connections with families impacted positively on children's experiences.

## Leadership

### Staff skills, knowledge, values, and deployment

Children were cared for by motivated staff who were committed to ongoing professional development. This contributed to staff having a clear understanding of how children thrive, learn, and develop. Guidance and practice notes, such as the Care Inspectorate campaign SIMOA (safety, inspect, monitor, observe, act), were embedded in practice to keep children safe. Other guidance, such as 'Realising the Ambition', was used well when planning to meet children's individual learning needs. Some staff demonstrated a very good understanding of Makaton, a system of signs and pictures to support children's communication. As a result, children were confident, happy, and well cared for.

Staff benefitted from a wide range of opportunities to share professional discussions with colleagues. For example, some staff who took part in nurture training were able to share their learning with others. This meant children received consistent care from compassionate, understanding, and patient staff.

Staff felt well supported by leaders within the setting. Annual appraisals supported this process and helped staff identify where improvements to their practice could be made. Regular team meetings promoted opportunities for staff to share information, reflect on their practice, and learn from others.

Staff were registered with a professional body and followed the codes of practice. This led to positive outcomes for children and families.

Staff worked well together and formed a strong team. Communication between staff was effective to promote consistent caring approaches. Experienced staff modelled high quality interactions and nurturing care, contributing to very good outcomes for children.

Arrangements for staff absences, both planned and unplanned, supported minimum disruption to children's play. Staff were flexible and happy to cover in other rooms when needed. Staff breaks were planned to minimise the impact on children's experience and staff's wellbeing was supported with a welcoming staff room for them to rest and be refreshed. Where possible, relief staff were known to the children and their families and they were well supported to follow nursery policy and procedures. This led to high quality experiences, consistent care, and happy children.

## Children are supported to achieve

### Nurturing care and support

Children experienced nurturing and loving care. They were well supported by warm, sensitive staff who were responsive to children's needs. Children were cuddled when upset, soothed to sleep when tired, and experienced joy when playing. Parent comments included, "Staff are friendly, approachable, helpful, and genuinely care about the welfare of my child" and "Staff are very caring, passionate, and enthusiastic".

Children's dignity and privacy was respected when supported in their personal care. Opportunities to promote children's self help skills and independence were encouraged when getting children ready to play outdoors.

Transitions were effective to support the individual needs of children. Children new to the setting were supported with settling-in visits individual to their needs. They were encouraged to bring family photos and favourite toys from home, providing reassurance to help them feel secure. Prior to moving between rooms, opportunities for children to build attachments and positive relationships with unfamiliar staff were embedded in practice.

Transitions between daily activities were well planned to limit interruptions to children's play. Good use of visuals helped some children process information and understand any changes to their daily routine. This led to improved engagement and happy and confident children.

Children were cared for by staff who were skilled and knowledgeable in nurture, care, and development. A range of strategies were used to support children to regulate their emotions, build resilience, and confidence. For example, safe, cosy spaces had been created to meet children's individual needs. Children were encouraged to be kind to others, contributing to a respectful and caring ethos.

Children experienced positive snacks and mealtimes. They were offered nutritious and appetising meals which most children enjoyed. Alternatives were offered when children did not like their meal and allergies and food intolerances were well catered for. Mealtimes were a sociable experience and children were well supported by staff who provided help when needed. There were opportunities to promote children's independence when serving food and tidying up.

Children were kept safe and well by knowledgeable staff and effective procedures in the safe administration of medication.

Children's wellbeing was supported through effective personal planning. The voice of children and parents were included within children's personal plans to support a consistent approach in their care. This included lots of photos and information about children's interests, likes, dislikes, and care routines. Personal plans were updated and reviewed with parents in line with legislation to ensure it remained current and relevant. Staff worked collaboratively with other professionals and parents to share information and improve children's care. This meant children received consistent and individualised care. Parents contacted 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they were fully involved in developing and reviewing their child's care plan.

Strong connections with families impacted positively on children's experiences. Daily chats, phone calls, and an online app enabled staff to share information. The nursery entrance was very welcoming and provided parents with space to chat, read books with their children, or access information displayed on the walls. One parent we spoke to said, "The ladies in the office, the chef, and staff in the other rooms know my child. They are very welcoming".

## 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).

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