

Cherry Tree (AMT) Ltd Day Care of Children

East Beancross Farm
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Falkirk
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 May 2025

Service provided by:
Cherry Tree (AMT) Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2017012927

Service no:
CS2017356526

About the service

Cherry Tree (AMT) Ltd is a daycare of children service situated in the Falkirk area close to green spaces and local amenities. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 42 children from birth to those not yet attending primary school.

The service has five playrooms to accommodate the various age groups of children. A large, enclosed garden offers daily opportunities for energetic active play. In addition to the playrooms there are toilets, a staff room and office facilities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 May 2025 between 08:45 and 17:55 and 28 May 2025 between 09:15 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, 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
- received feedback from 21 families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- A positive ethos and a culture of continuous improvement had been embraced and resulted in improved outcomes and experiences for children.
- Children experienced nurturing, caring and warm interactions which supported them to feel safe, happy and relaxed.
- Children had fun and were actively involved in leading their play experiences.
- Children were confident in sharing their learning journals and took ownership of these.
- The outdoor space had significantly improved and offered children a wide range of exciting and engaging play opportunities.
- Staff had established positive relationships with children and families. They knew them very well and used this knowledge to ensure children were well supported.

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?	5 - Very 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 different parts of this key question as very good and good, with an overall evaluation of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced nurturing, caring and warm interactions which supported them to feel happy and relaxed. They were offered comfort, cuddles and reassurance and had made strong connections with staff. This helped them to feel loved, safe and secure. Staff understood the importance and value of positive attachments and as a result had built strong relationships with children and families to meet their holistic and wellbeing needs. Attachments between children and staff were very well considered which meant children were sensitively cared for by staff who were responsive to their needs and cues. Families told us, "The staff are amazing, friendly, so attentive to the kids" and "The staff are always friendly and approachable and genuinely care about my child".

Staff knew children and families very well and used this knowledge to ensure children were well supported. Staff took time to visit babies and their families at home to discuss and plan for their individual needs. This enabled staff to ensure that care was tailored and personalised and supported them to establish positive relationships. Staff were knowledgeable about what mattered to children and effectively implemented strategies of support. As a result, children experienced high quality care where they were nurtured, loved, and respected. Staff had identified ways to improve personal plans and were in the process of developing these to be more meaningful.

Children were nurtured through their daily experiences. Their personal care needs were met with dignity and respect. For example, children were sensitively asked if their nappy could be changed. Warm interactions during nappy changing created a relaxed experience which supported positive attachments.

Children were involved in planning and preparing meals and snacks which supported them to develop life skills and responsibility. They had opportunities to be independent during mealtimes, for example, self-serving food and pouring their own drinks. Older children chose when to eat their snacks and meals which meant they experienced uninterrupted play. Staff were considerate of younger children's individual routines and preferences and were responsive to their cues. Children across the setting experienced mealtimes which were relaxed, calm and sociable.

Children's safety, emotional security and wellbeing were supported through sensitive arrangements for sleep. Children's sleep routines were individualised. They were offered comfort and gently soothed if this is what helped them to settle.

Children's medical needs were well understood by staff. Medication was safely stored and clearly labelled to keep children safe. Medication was audited to ensure it was in date and still required, however it was unclear if medication permissions were reviewed as part of the audit. Some permission forms lacked detail and we suggested this is reviewed and updated to enhance the safety of the management of medication.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had fun and were actively involved in leading their play experiences. They were confident, happy and engaged in a range of play experiences. They had developed some connections to their local community which enhanced their play and learning experiences. For example, they enjoyed walks in the local area and visits to the garden centre.

Staff were responsive to children's interests and facilitated their play. A new approach to tracking children's development had been implemented. There was now scope for this to be used to support staff to consider planning intentional play and learning experiences. Staff had developed their knowledge and understanding of schematic play and were confident in planning play experiences to promote this. They recognised children's schematic play types and offered activities to explore these.

Children's language and literacy skills were well supported throughout the setting. For example, children enjoyed singing, reading stories and mark making. Staff supported children effectively using language appropriate to their stage of development. Children had some opportunities to develop numeracy skills through play experiences, for example, counting and recognising colours.

Staff celebrated children's achievements which helped to increase children's self-esteem and confidence. Children were given appropriate time to think and respond which enabled them to make decisions and choices about their care, play and learning. Some staff used effective questioning and commentary to support and challenge children's thinking. There was scope for this to be developed across the staff team to consistently challenge children in their play.

Children were confident in sharing their learning journals and took ownership of these. Each journal was personal and individualised which gave children the message that they mattered. The quality of observations for older children had improved. There was clear evaluation of their learning and development and next steps were tailored to each child. As a result, they were making good progress. A new approach to supporting children's development and progress had been introduced for younger children. Staff were in the early stages of implementing this and had not yet identified next steps for younger children.

How good is our setting?**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children and families experienced a welcoming and inviting entrance. Spaces across the setting were well furnished and comfortable. Younger children benefitted from improvements within the playroom as staff had created a more cosy, homely space. Children had a variety of spaces to rest, relax and retreat to outdoors.

Play spaces across the setting were developmentally appropriate. Children had a choice of resources within playrooms which were interesting and reflected their current interests and curiosities. The outdoor space had significantly improved and all areas of the garden were well presented and inviting. The outdoor environment offered children a wide range of exciting and engaging play opportunities and as a result, they had lots of fun outdoors. Very good consideration had been given to ensuring the outdoor space provided opportunities for all children's stages of development. Children investigated and were creative in the mud kitchen, enjoyed exploring and digging in the sandpit and developed their gross motor skills riding bikes. Children had fun opportunities to experience risky play for example, they enjoyed climbing and jumping from pallets. These opportunities gave children confidence to explore, manage and assess risks in their play. Families commented positively on the development of the outdoor space. Their comments included: "Garden facilities are excellent and well utilised" and "The nursery are constantly improving things and especially outside there are lots of improvements being made".

Children experienced play spaces which were safe, well maintained and well ventilated. There were well functioning arrangements in place for the monitoring, maintenance and repair of the setting. Infection prevention and control measures were embedded into daily practice. Children were well supported by staff to wash their hands at key times throughout the day which minimised the risk of potential spread of infection.

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

A positive ethos and a culture of continuous improvement had been embraced and resulted in improved outcomes and experiences for children. The manager and staff team had a clear vision about the development of the service and were committed, motivated and passionate to achieve this. Children and families had been involved in reviewing the vision, values and aims of the setting. It was evident that the service created a nurturing and family ethos which was embedded into practice.

Children and families had meaningful opportunities to be involved in developing the service. For example, through questionnaires and taking part in developing the garden. Their feedback was listened to, valued and acted on to make changes and improvements within the setting. Families told us, "Parental voice is always engaged with and the app is very effective to aid this" and "Always updating us in projects they are doing and where we can support - the garden being the biggest one".

A robust improvement plan with clear, realistic and achievable goals had been created. Staff were knowledgeable and confident about the improvements and had worked together with the manager to make positive changes for children and families. Staff were reflective which enabled them to identify strengths and further areas of development across the setting. They had a good understanding of where they were within their improvement journey and were motivated to continue to improve children's experiences and outcomes. There was scope to further reflect on practice through developing self evaluation processes to create a continuous cycle of improvement.

Quality assurance processes had been developed. A range of audits were carried out and actions taken which were supporting improvement. Some monitoring took place, for example, on the quality of observations which had a positive impact. Children would benefit from a wider range of monitoring being implemented, for example, focusing on staff practice to enhance play and learning experiences.

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 demonstrated a range of skills, knowledge and experience. This was carefully considered and planned for across the rooms, including during transitions, to meet children's needs. This meant children benefitted from responsive, fun and meaningful care, play and learning experiences.

Staff had established positive relationships with children and families. Families told us that staff took time to talk with them about their child's day. This supported good communication and consistency of care. Families commented, "I get feedback at every pick up and I am comfortable talking to every member of staff. Everyone is friendly and takes an interest in my child" and "If I ever need to discuss my child's care, the manager has been very helpful and approachable".

Generally, staff communicated well together and worked as a team. This meant children experienced positive care, play and learning experiences. On one occasion, there was a lack of communication between staff which meant children were not effectively supervised.

Staff breaks were well planned around children's needs, for example, key staff supported children during mealtimes providing children with familiarity and consistency. Absences were well managed, as children were familiar with relief staff and had formed positive, nurturing relationships with them. New staff were well supported by the staff team. They were given important information about children's needs to support them effectively. This meant children experienced consistency in 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

To enable all children to be cared for in an environment that meets their needs and supports them to reach their full potential, the manager and staff should as a minimum ensure play spaces offer a range of resources and materials to effectively challenge and stimulate children and reflect their current interests and curiosities.

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 8 May 2024.

Action taken since then

Children experienced improved play spaces which were inviting and engaging. There were a range of resources available which were interesting and reflected children's current interests. As a result, children had fun and were stimulated in their play.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To keep children safe and healthy, the provider should ensure that children experience an environment that is well maintained. This should include but is not limited to:

- a) review the environment for potential risks and take action to address these
- b) implement an effective system for maintenance and repair and ensure actions identified are appropriately and timeously addressed.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17).

This area for improvement was made on 8 May 2024.

Action taken since then

Children experienced an environment which was well maintained. An effective system had been developed and implemented to ensure any risks identified were addressed which helped to keep children safe.

This area for improvement has 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	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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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