Pinocchio Nursery
Day Care of Children

Newbattle Road
Eskbank
Dalkeith
EH22 3AU

Telephone: 01316 540 070

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 March 2023

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

Service provider number:
SP2003002984

Service no:
CS2003011827

About the service

Pinocchio Nursery is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of 124 children at any one time aged between three months and primary school entry no more than 16 are aged under two years.

The nursery operates throughout the year and is a partner provider with the local authority to provide funded hours for children aged three to entry into primary school.

The nursery is situated in Eskbank which is an area of Dalkeith, Midlothian. The premises consists of several playrooms, staff facilities, kitchen and spacious outdoor play areas.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 02 February 2023 and 09 March 2023. 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 15 children using the service and received comments from 20 parents
- spoke with staff, the manager and operations director
- observed staff practice and daily experiences for children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

• Children were cared for by staff who understood the importance of nurture and positive relationships.

• Children were happy, confident and having fun in nursery.

• The work to develop planning for play and learning was having a positive impact on the range and quality of play experiences.

• Parents spoke positively about the quality of the staff team.

• Work needed to continue to ensure that children's learning and information about each child was shared with parents.

• Self-evaluation processes need to continue and include parents, staff and children.

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.

Quality Indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Staff interacted with children in a warm and caring manner. Children were reassured and comforted when needed, by staff who understood the importance of nurturing relationships. Children were confident in their surroundings as they were well supported by staff to develop independence and make choices for themselves. For example, choosing to play indoors or outdoors, choosing when to have lunch and dressing for outdoor play.

Personal plans were in place for each child. Staff had carried out recent development work to ensure that they understood the purpose of this document. The personal plans included information to support staff to meet the needs of children. The service should ensure that where children have plans in place to support them that these are regularly reviewed to assess the progress being made. Parents commented that although there had been changes to the service and to staff teams, they felt staff knew their child well and were able to support them.

Children benefitted from mealtimes which encouraged social interaction and the learning of life skills. Older children had opportunities to choose when to come to lunch. They poured their own drinks and chose what to eat. For the 3-5 year old children we asked that staff supervision levels were sufficient to ensure they knew if a child had eaten enough at that time. Younger children were well supported at lunchtime to have an enjoyable social time. Staff were well organised and assisted with feeding where necessary. The provision of food was an important part of nursery life. However, we have asked staff to look at the amount of time in a day when play stops to accommodate meals and snacks.

Children's health and wellbeing was promoted through the procedures for medication, recording of allergies and food preferences and accident and incident recording. We highlighted that medication recording in the 3 -5 year old playroom needed amendments. This had been completed by the end of our visit and a new procedure developed for staff.

Children who needed to sleep during the day benefited from safe sleeping areas with appropriate sleeping environments, equipment, and bedding. Staff understood the importance of meeting individual needs for sleep routines. Overall, the procedure for monitoring sleeping children took account of good practice but this could be re-visited to ensure that all staff were aware of how to fully promote this.

Children in the two older age groups had sustained opportunities to play outdoors if they wanted to. Several children in the Adventure Room (3-5 years) told us that they 'loved the big garden'. We discussed outdoor play with staff in the Junior Room (18 - 26 months approximately) and asked that they significantly increased the amount of time they spent outdoors. Children were familiar with the local area as they went on regular walks with staff.

Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and Learning

Overall older children were having fun and were engaged in their play. Staff had carried out significant work in the Adventure Room to improve the planning for play and learning to enable staff to reflect what children were learning and how to extend and enhance that learning. The room seniors had ensured that the planning process was shared with staff and less experienced staff were supported to understand the planning process. By our second visit this had resulted in children who were more engaged in their play.

The newly formed Early Learner room provided children with a good range of interesting activities. Planning for play and learning was at the early stages and staff now needed to develop this system to enable them to assess what children were achieving and enjoying.

Play opportunities for the youngest children were age appropriate and provided children with chances to develop their physical skills and take part in drawing and creative play such as drawing, painting, and singing. Staff understood the stages of development for this age group and planned activities accordingly.

Children in the Junior room had a range of resources available to them, but they were not engaged particularly well in their play. Staff working with this group could develop their understanding of play for this age group to ensure that activities had meaning and were age appropriate.

The large outdoor area and the smaller areas for specific age groups provided children with a range of learning opportunities. Staff in the Adventure room were developing the small area which led directly from their playroom to ensure that it provided a greater range of learning opportunities. We have asked staff to consider how free choice to play indoors or outdoors could be achieved when they use the 'big garden'. We have suggested to all age groups that outdoor experiences are included on the planning for play and learning to further develop opportunities and the quality of staff interactions in the outdoor areas.

Staff were using tools from the local authority to ensure that learning for children in the Adventure room was tracked. Staff could talk to us about individual children's learning and areas of strength. Parents commented that although they knew what their child did during the day, they did not feel they had enough information about their child's learning. The frequency of observations recorded on the digital learning journal was being addressed by managers.

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.

Quality Indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

The nursery building provided children with a warm welcoming and spacious place to play and be cared for in. The building had recently been extended to provide children aged 3-5 years with a bright, airy, and attractive place to play. By our second visit some changes had been made to the use of play spaces to provide children aged roughly 2.5-3 years with their own playroom. Although this increased the number of transitions a child would have in their time at nursery, it benefitted children through the smaller grouping and more age-appropriate activities.

Staff were carrying out work to fully assess and develop the play environments to make best use of lighting, natural items such as plants and cosy spaces for children to use. The further development of the room environments would provide children with relaxing and attractive places to play which will let them know that they are valued.

The nursery was furnished with tables and chairs which were of appropriate height for the children. Children could use play resources that were plentiful and of good quality. There was ample space for the children to move or crawl around between activities and areas within each room. The addition of adult height chairs in the younger playrooms would let staff sit more comfortably at lunch time to enable them to fully support children.

Staff used infection, prevention and control guidance to ensure that the nursery was clean. Staff followed appropriate nappy changing practices and staff and children washed their hands at key points during the day. We asked that the handwashing procedures were monitored where older children could access fruit throughout the session or self-select cut fruit at snack time.

The nursery had large and well-resourced outdoor areas for each age group. We have commented that these areas were on the whole used for significant periods of the day. We spoke to staff about the need to develop ways that older children could choose to play indoors or outdoors when using the big garden.

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

There had been significant change in the nursery with the addition of the new playroom and changes to staff teams. The manager and operations director had an action plan in place to address this, and good progress had been made to provide children with consistent staff in their playrooms. A new leadership structure had been developed to support the staff group.

The implementation of staff meetings for both qualified and unqualified staff was helping to develop a shared approach to care and learning across the nursery. Good quality minutes of these meetings will help staff to understand who is responsible for actions that are identified and evidence reflective discussion and decision making.

A statement to outline the vision, values and aims of the nursery was in place. This was shared with families when they registered with the service. It would be beneficial for children, families and staff to be involved in any future consultations or reviews relating to the vision of the service.

Staffing difficulties over the past year had an impact on the processes for quality assurance and self-evaluation. An improvement plan, as part of the local authority funded hours, was in place and managers could talk to us in depth about the current priorities for improvement. Managers and staff had implemented several improvement since our first visit to the nursery, this proactive approach should continue to fully include staff and parents. This will help to inform the action plan for further improvement and development.

The voice of the child was evident in how staff take account of children's individual needs and staff were developing children's influence through the introduction of responsive planning and personal planning improvements.

Parents told us that there were opportunities to give their opinion and be involved in nursery. Parents were warmly welcomed into the nursery to see first-hand what their children experienced in nursery. Some parents said that the quality of communication about their child's day was variable. We asked staff to re-visit communication with parents to find a manageable and meaningful solution.

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 to meet the needs of children and created a warm and welcoming environment. They were motivated and enthusiastic with a shared vision to ensure that children were well supported.

Parents were very positive about the staff team, and they told us, 'All staff are warm and welcoming and are kind towards my child', 'I thought it was important to reach out and praise the excellence of this nursery and especially the staff, as it's so easy for all the hard work behind childcare to go unnoticed, but really it is one of the most important jobs of all' and 'All the staff are fantastic, really engaged with our daughter and she is always full of smiles for them all. The warmth, professionalism, care, and general atmosphere created by the staff in her room is first class'.

The organisation of the playrooms on our first visit had resulted in minimum staffing levels, which were not fully meeting the needs of children. The change of playrooms had made staffing ratios clearer and throughout the second visit staff deployment fully met the needs of children.

To support the less experienced or unqualified staff changes had been made to the staff team. Senior staff provided very positive and capable role models for staff. Further use of the national induction resource would help the manager develop an induction process to enhance the current process.

The newly formed staff teams communicated well with each other and pulled together throughout the day. They knew what their role was during the session and where they should be. This led to a relaxed staff group who were focused and clear about their responsibilities. This ensured that children felt safe and secure in the care of the staff team.

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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