Pinocchio's Children's Nursery
Day Care of Children

14 School Green
Lasswade
EH18 1NB

Telephone: 01316 542 914

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
29 July 2026

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

Service provider number:
SP2003002984

Service no:
CS2003012090

About the service

Pinocchio's Children's Nursery is registered by the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of 67 children at any one time aged from three months to 12 years old. This includes a maximum of 15 children under 2 years accommodated at one time.

At the time of our visit the setting only provided care for children up to primary school age.

The setting is situated in the small village of Lasswade in Midlothian. The building provides three separate playrooms for the different ages and stages of the children attending. There are two designated outdoor play areas, one of which is used for the younger children and one which is set up to be more suitable for the older children's stage of development.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 July 2026 between the hours of 9:00 and 16:45. 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 several children during their play
- considered feedback from five families and two staff, through an online questionnaire
- spoke with staff, the manager and operations manager
- observed staff practice and daily experiences for children
- reviewed documents
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. We comment on some areas of improvement needed to the environment and personal planning which are linked to core assurances and the quality improvement framework.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, nurturing relationships with caring staff who knew them well and supported them to feel safe, valued and confident.

- Management demonstrated a clear commitment to continuous improvement and positive outcomes for children and their families.

- Older children benefited from positive staff interactions and responsive planning that effectively supported their learning, development and achievements.

- Personal plans should ensure key information and support strategies are clearly recorded, regularly reviewed and accessible to all staff to support consistent care and positive outcomes for children.

- Infection prevention and control practices had improved, the service should continue to maintain these standards through regular monitoring, staff discussions and prompt action where areas for improvement are identified.

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

Leadership 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The service's vision, values and aims had been discussed with staff and were displayed throughout the setting. The manager recognised the need to develop these and plans to review them with other managers across the company. This review should consider how these values reflect the unique ethos of the setting and promote a rights-based approach. The service need to consult with children, families and staff which would help ensure the vision, values and aims were meaningful, representative and support individuals to feel included, respected and valued.

The manager had undertaken significant work to strengthen quality assurance processes, with auditing and monitoring systems in place to support continuous improvement. Additional oversight from senior leaders further strengthened monitoring arrangements and helped ensure actions were progressed and reviewed. While a commitment to quality assurance was evident, some inconsistencies remained in relation to cleanliness, learning journal entries and personal planning documentation. The service recognised the need to further develop quality assurance systems to ensure they remain effective, proportionate and focused on improving outcomes for children.

Self-evaluation processes were developing well. The standard and quality improvement plan was regularly discussed and used effectively within the older children's room to evidence positive change. This approach should now be embedded consistently across all rooms. Staff showed reflective practice, that identified and implemented improvements to support positive outcomes for children. This included adapting play experiences for children to provide additional challenge and meet their individual needs.

Staff recruitment was on-going and leaders recognised that workforce changes were likely to continue. Safer recruitment practices were in place and induction processes had been established. As recruitment continued, the service could consider embedding the service's vision, values and aims within the recruitment process. This would support staff to understand the ethos of both the organisation and the setting from the outset.

A training plan was in place and the manager had oversight of core training needs and individual staff development plans. Initial work had been undertaken to evaluate the impact of training, with further development identified within the forthcoming improvement plan. The senior leadership team should identify and monitor training needs through observations of practice and appraisal processes. Positive progress had been made in this area, and the area for improvement was met.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Quality indicator - Children experience high quality spaces.

Children were observed to be engaged and making good use of high-quality resources throughout the setting.

The environment was generally clean and well maintained. A small number of items, that included soft furnishings and dolls, needed laundering. Handwashing practice for older children was not always consistently supervised and needed further attention to support good hygiene practices. Several issues identified during the inspection were addressed immediately, and senior leaders provided assurance that monitoring arrangements would continue. Quality assurance processes should continue to focus on cleanliness standards and infection prevention and control practices to support ongoing improvement. The requirement relating to infection prevention and control had been met. However, an area for improvement was made to help ensure high standards were maintained across the setting. **(See area for improvement 1).**

Staff demonstrated an understanding of maintenance reporting procedures and the setting benefits from the support of a dedicated maintenance person. Continued vigilance in regularly reviewing the environment and promptly reporting concerns would help to ensure high standards of safety were maintained. Children benefit from a well-resourced and largely safe environment, with identified maintenance actions supporting continued improvement. The area for improvement relating to the safe storage of resources, equipment and cleaning products had been met.

Staff had a good understanding of children's developmental needs and adapted environments accordingly. Children were provided with meaningful opportunities to lead their play, make choices and influence their learning environment. Staff effectively captured children's views through environmental audits and responsive planning. This meant children experienced environments that reflected their interests and supported engagement. A parent commented "I would say the most positive aspects of my child's experiences at the nursery are that it's a safe and welcoming environment, the staff are supportive and engaging, and the range of activities/healthy food/opportunities are outstanding".

Information was stored securely and effective record-keeping systems were in place. Information management systems support confidentiality, accountability and the effective operation of the service.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children, staff and families experience a clean, safe and well-maintained environment. The provider could ensure all areas of the setting are clean and well-maintained to support effective infection prevention and control procedures in line with good practice guidance. Staff should have the necessary information and training to follow the settings infection prevention and control policies.

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)

Children play and learn 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Quality indicator- Playing, learning and developing.

Children were happy, engaged and had fun across the setting. They developed confidence, physical skills, communication and sharing through play at their own pace. A parent commented "My child has been involved in a variety of messy play activities such as water play and painting. My child typically enjoys using the freedom to choose which activity they would like to do in the garden, usually involving drawing or riding the bikes".

In the junior room, children were settled and actively learnt new skills. The increased consistency within the staff team had led to improvements in practice. Staff needed to continue to review the environment to make sure children had access to a range of play experiences. This could include developing further opportunities for heuristic and schematic play. These opportunities would support children to explore, investigate and develop their thinking, creativity and understanding of the world around them.

Older children accessed a range of stimulating play experiences that promoted creativity, problem-solving, teamwork and early literacy skills. They were busy and involved in their play. Further development of the home corner, sand play, vehicle play and the inclusion of literacy resources across all areas would help increase engagement and extend learning opportunities. Musical instruments could be made more accessible and inviting to encourage children's creativity and self-expression. Children were actively engaged in meaningful play experiences that supported their learning, development and wellbeing. A parent commented, "Staff regularly follow children's interests and staff are very responsive to my child's preferences."

All children benefited from a range of outdoor experiences that supported physical development, confidence and social skills. Older children had good access to free-flow outdoor play and confidently moved between indoor and outdoor environments. Younger children's outdoor area would benefit from further review to enhance its appeal and provide more stimulating opportunities for exploration and play.

Staff were caring, responsive and nurturing towards children. Positive interactions, conversations, songs and stories supported children's communication and wellbeing. Familiar staff supported older children to extended their thinking and learning. On the day of inspection, reliance on cover staff impacted opportunities to consistently build on children's interests and deepen learning experiences. Younger children were treated with respect and warm, caring and responsive interactions supported children's wellbeing, development and next stages of development.

Planning systems supported children's learning and development across the setting. In the younger age groups, observations were used effectively to identify individual learning priorities. However, some gaps were identified and planning did not always reflect children's current interests and progress. Staff training and the use of the local authority's under-threes planning guidance would help strengthen child-led and responsive approaches.

Older children were at the centre of planning. Effective use of observations, responsive planning and intentional experiences ensured children's interests directly influenced learning opportunities. Clear evidence demonstrated how children's ideas were extended through meaningful experiences, that supported progress and development. Tracking systems were effective and the area for improvement relating to tracking and sharing children's learning and development had been met. Going forward, staff should continue to provide appropriate challenge for children who were progressing more quickly and ensure observations and next steps were consistently recorded. This would support accurate tracking of children's progress and learning.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Quality indicator - Nurturing care and support.
Children experienced warm, nurturing care and support. Staff knew children well and responded appropriately to their individual needs. Interactions were respectful and caring.

Mealtimes were calm, relaxed and social experiences. Younger children were supported to eat and enjoy their meals. Older children had opportunities to develop independence through self-serving, pouring drinks and clearing away dishes. Snack times encouraged choice and independence. Staff sitting with the older children would further enhance these experiences. Mealtimes promoted children's wellbeing, independence and comfort.

Children's health and wellbeing was well supported. Medication was organised, stored safely and contained relevant care plans and documentation. Regular medication reviews were taking place. A small number of recording inconsistencies were identified and discussed with the manager. Quality assurance processes could be strengthened to support auditing processes. Staff had undertaken child protection training and demonstrated an awareness of trauma-informed practice. Ongoing professional discussion through team meetings would further strengthen staff confidence in responding to safeguarding concerns.

Personal plans were in place and included information provided by families. Chronologies were regularly updated and most contained strategies to support children. Across the service, information to support individual children was available; however, approaches to recording, reviewing and sharing this information were not consistent. Some support strategies were not easily accessible which limited their use in practice. Strategies would benefit from being regularly reviewed, evaluated and updated in response to children's changing needs and progress. To support staff in strengthening this area and promote a more consistent approach across the service, an area for improvement has been made **(See area for improvement 1).**

Positive relationships had been established with families. Staff were welcoming and shared information about children's experiences and progress. Parents had opportunities to contribute to their children's learning through observations, developmental updates and parents' evenings. Further opportunities to provide feedback and contribute to the wider service were available through regular questionnaires. Feedback gathered through these approaches was used to inform service development and support continuous improvement. A parent commented "I am super happy with the nursery in general and would like to mention a special thanks to the manager and all the members of the junior room for helping make my child's transition into nursery as smooth and as calm as possible".

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure each child receives appropriate care and support and their needs are met. Personal Plans should be reviewed to ensure they are streamlined and strategies are effective, regularly monitored and evaluated. Review systems should also ensure that any changes in family circumstances, routines or children's development are accurately reflected and inform if support is needed.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices (HSCS 1.15).

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 31 October 2024, the provider must ensure children, staff and families experience a clean, safe and well-maintained environment.
To do this, the provider must:
a) ensure all areas of the setting are clean and well-maintained to support effective infection prevention and control procedures in line with good practice guidance.
b) ensure that staff have the necessary information and training to follow the settings infection prevention and control policies.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) and (d) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

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 requirement was made on 9 September 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement
The cleanliness of the environment had improved, with most resources observed to be clean and well maintained. Overall, staff demonstrated a commitment to maintaining a safe and hygienic environment for children. To support continued progress, staff should remain attentive to the regular laundering of items such as dolls and soft furnishings, ensuring high standards are consistently upheld. Ongoing quality assurance processes will help identify and address any areas requiring further attention.

During the inspection, a small number of areas were identified where further improvements could enhance infection prevention and control practices:

- Bin lids in all rooms would benefit from more regular cleaning.
- Storage arrangements within the older children's bathroom required review, as cupboards were overcrowded with clothing, open packs of nappies and other resources. This was highlighted to the provider and manager and was promptly addressed during the inspection.
- A bag of clothing contained within a paper bag had been stored in the under-twos changing area. While we acknowledge that parents regularly bring clothing into the setting, a more effective storage system would help ensure items are kept in appropriate locations.
- Handwashing supervision for older children was not always consistent. As this has been discussed at previous inspections, continued focus in this area will further support children to develop and maintain good hygiene practices.

Infection prevention and control (IPC) should continue to be discussed within the service. Keeping IPC as a standing agenda item at staff meetings will support ongoing reflection, monitoring and reinforcement of

good practice.

Several of the issues identified were addressed immediately during the inspection, demonstrating a commitment to improvement. We also received assurance from the senior leadership team that IPC standards will continue to be closely monitored and reviewed. As a result, we consider this requirement to have been met. However, an area for improvement will be made to support the service in embedding sustainable practice.

Met - outwith 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 ensure that children's safety and wellbeing is promoted staff should ensure that resources and equipment are stored safely and that cleaning products are stored out of reach and sight of children.

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 9 September 2024.

Action taken since then

Overall, resources and equipment were stored safely, and cleaning products were generally kept out of the reach and sight of children. To further strengthen safety arrangements, the service should ensure that anti-bacterial spray bottles are not stored on sinks within the older children's room, as these could potentially be accessed by children.

The environment was well organised, with only a few opportunities identified to further improve storage and presentation. In the baby room, some resources could be stored more effectively to maximise space and maintain a tidy environment.

The outdoor walkway used by younger children contained several attractive planters which have the potential to enrich the environment. However, these contained nettles. As many younger children use the planters for support while mobilising, regular maintenance is required to ensure this area remains safe and welcoming.

The plastic screening at the entrance to the garden for younger children required review, as some sections had developed sharp edges which could pose a risk to children.
The exposed tank and pipework within the ELC bathroom require to be boxed in. The service is aware of this

issue and arrangements were in place to address it.

The service responded positively to the feedback provided and demonstrated a commitment to maintaining a safe and well-presented environment for children.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The tracking and sharing of children's learning and development should be further supported by a consistent approach to the recording procedures. This should include guidance for all staff on the expectations of sharing development with parents and monitoring observation quality to ensure the effective tracking of children's development.

This is to ensure that care and support are consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: "I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me." (HSCS 1.27.)

This area for improvement was made on 9 September 2024.

Action taken since then

Observations of children's learning and development were shared with parents through Famly and were monitored by the manager. Most observations in the ELC room clearly demonstrated children's progress and linked effectively to their learning and development. While the quality and detail of entries varied between staff members, the service had systems in place to oversee and review practice.

Moving forward, the service should continue to reinforce expectations with staff and maintain oversight of observations to ensure consistency in recording children's learning and the effective tracking of their progress and development.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The leadership team should ensure that quality assurance systems, such as auditing of processes and procedures, is effective in identifying gaps in the service or areas of practice which need improvement.

This is to ensure that care and support are 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.) and 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed (HSCS 4.23.)

This area for improvement was made on 9 September 2024.

Action taken since then

The manager had undertaken a significant amount of work to strengthen quality assurance processes. An auditing system had been developed to support continuous improvement and ensure identified actions were progressed and reviewed regularly. An additional level of oversight is provided by the senior leaders, which further enhanced monitoring arrangements. Where areas for development were identified, action plans were

implemented and reviewed to ensure improvements were achieved and sustained.

The service had demonstrated a commitment to quality assurance; however, some areas would benefit from further attention to ensure systems were consistently effective. These include aspects of cleanliness and hygiene, the quality and consistency of learning journal entries and personal planning documentation.

While there was a substantial amount of quality assurance documentation in place, the focus should remain on ensuring systems were meaningful, effective and lead to positive outcomes for children. The service should continue to refine and embed its quality assurance processes to ensure they remain effective, proportionate and outcome-focused.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

Children should receive care from staff who are well trained and skilled in their childcare role. A training plan for staff should be developed to include areas such as child development, nurture, interactions to support learning and infection prevention and control.

This is to ensure that care and support are consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.' (HSCS 3.14.)

This area for improvement was made on 9 September 2024.

Action taken since then

A training plan had been developed and the manager maintained an effective overview of when staff required updates to core training. Individual training plans were also in place, supporting staff development and helping to ensure learning opportunities were aligned to their roles and responsibilities.

Some evaluation of training had taken place to assess its impact on practice. The manager demonstrated a good understanding of the need to further develop this area and had already identified this within the Service Quality Improvement Plan (SQIP).

Senior leaders should continue to use quality assurance activities, observations of practice and appraisal processes to identify individual and team training needs. This will help ensure that training is targeted, completed within agreed timescales, and has a positive impact on outcomes for children.

The service has made positive progress in this area and should now focus on embedding these systems to support a confident, skilled and knowledgeable workforce.

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.scot.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
Children experience high quality spaces	4 - Good

Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good

Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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