# Pear Tree Nurseries Ltd
# Day Care of Children

32 Meadowpark
Haddington
EH41 4DS

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**Type of inspection:**
Unannounced

**Completed on:**
16 July 2024

**Service provided by:**
Pear Tree Nurseries Ltd

**Service provider number:**
SP2006008293

**Service no:**
CS2006118860

## About the service

Pear Tree Nurseries Ltd is an early learning and childcare setting situated in a residential area of Haddington, close to transport links, shops and community services. The service provides a day care of children service to a maximum of 58 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. No more than 14 are aged under 2 years.

The setting operates from a detached Victorian house. There is an enclosed garden to the rear and a smaller garden to the front for children to benefit from fresh air and outdoor play experience. The ground floor contains two interconnecting playrooms for children aged two to five years, Eagle Explorers for 3-5 year olds and the Fox Cubs Room for children 2-3 years. The upper floor of the building is used by the children who are under the age of two years, based in the Owl Babies room. There is a balcony area for babies to play outdoors.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 16 July 2024. 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
- received 22 electronic questionnaires from parents
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children experienced a sense of belonging which positively impacted their overall wellbeing.
- Staff's positive body language, reassuring tone of voice, and warm facial expressions communicated to children that their voices were heard and valued.
- Mealtimes had improved significantly, becoming a positive experience for each age group.
- Staff ensured children had fun while engaging in high quality play, learning, and development opportunities.
- Parents were complimentary of the staff team and the way in which they cared for their child.
- All actions required from the last inspection had been carried out, resulting in improved outcomes for 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**

Children received praise, encouragement, cuddles, and reassurance as needed from staff, fostering a sense of love and nurture that supported their overall wellbeing and happiness. As an improvement to the last inspection, staff's positive body language, reassuring tone of voice, and warm facial expressions communicated to children that their voices were heard and valued. Parents echoed this in our questionnaire feedback, as when asked about the positive aspects of the setting, they told us, 'The child centred approach', 'The general care and love for the children' and 'The staff. They genuinely care for the children in their rooms and show a respect for them'.

We sampled personal plans and saw that 'All About Me' records were created with parents to capture children's needs, interests, and preferences using the wellbeing indicators. These personal plans gave examples of partnership working with families to promote children's needs and interests. This practice was confirmed by the majority of parents in our questionnaire feedback, an example comment being, 'At regular points staff have asked for updates and guidance on changes to my child's personal plan to ensure it is in line with their needs and development as much as possible'. Transitions into the setting and between rooms were planned and documented to ensure essential information was shared, promoting children's security and wellbeing. Home visits were included as part of these transitions, to build trust and help children and families feel secure with the changes. Staff used pastoral logs to record any changes in a child's life, needs, and information gathered from parents, which supported the team to meet current needs. However, some of the personal plans needed updating and streamlining to ensure staff had access to the most current information about children's needs. The manager was in the process of personal plan reviews which would address any gaps.

Staff viewed daily routines as learning opportunities and actively involved even the youngest of children in tasks such as setting up tables for meals and assisting with clearing up. This was echoed by a parent who told us, 'My child is super independent and today at drop off the fox cubs were busy filling up the water table themselves, taking turns to fetch water from the sink and decant it, they couldn't wait to join in'. This approach fostered responsibility, independence, and a sense of belonging for children.

Mealtimes had improved significantly, becoming a positive experience for each age group. Recent reviews of practice positively influenced the lunchtime routine, fostering confident children who engaged independently while making choices and enjoying social interactions in a relaxed, unhurried environment. Staff supported these interactions by sitting with children, facilitating conversations, and offering encouraging and safe support nearby. These changes resulted in enhanced mealtime experiences that promoted children's safety, independence, social skills, and overall enjoyment of meals. Nutritious food choices aligned with current guidance and alternatives were offered to those who were not keen on the meal provided.

The pace of the day was flexible and responsive to suit children's individual needs. Staff respected children's preferences, such as allowing extra playtime before naps and seeking their consent when changing clothes or nappies. This approach empowered children through free movement around the space, highlighting the

importance of their input and voice in shaping daily routines. Staff spoke about collaboration with families to maintain consistency with home routines. However, improvements were needed in communicating with parents who expected children to be awakened after a set period, as observed with a distressed child. Moving forward, staff should ensure close partnership working with parents to prioritise the wellbeing, comfort and, rights of each child.

**Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning**

Play spaces and experiences indoors and out promoted learning and engagement. When asked about experiences their children had been involved in, a parent gave good examples of the exciting and fun experiences, 'Forest school, garden play, drawing/painting, baking, imaginary play - for example yesterday they were all pretending to be aboard a plane, one staff member brought in snails from home, looking after chicks, seeing tadpoles grow. The list is endless and varied'. We observed children freely transporting resources around the spaces to lead their own play. As a result, children were busy and engaged in their play for long periods of time as they extended their interests and developed their own ideas.

Staff placed the needs and interests of children at the centre of activities and experiences. For example, recognising that some children were hesitant to try new foods, staff organised a fun activity where they and the children visited a local supermarket to explore and purchase 'unusual' foods. Afterwards, they engaged the children in touching and tasting these foods. This not only encouraged exploration and curiosity but also helped broaden children's palates, fostering a positive attitude towards trying new foods.

The team identified a gap in the effectiveness of the plans for play, noting it did not adequately capture and document the child-centred approaches and responsiveness to children's needs. A recent meeting was held to discuss these concerns, with participation from all staff to collectively shape a revised approach to planning for play. Staff told us that by improving this process, children would benefit from more personalised and responsive play experiences tailored to their individual interests, developmental stages, and needs. We were encouraged to learn this would include enhancing play experiences to develop children's skills in language, literacy, and numeracy. This work would foster deeper engagement, spark children's imagination, and enrich their play and learning.

An online system and daily chats were used to update parents on their child's development, interests, and experiences within the setting. This was confirmed by a parent who told us, 'We often chat about my children's care and days on pick up and give information from home too'. The current review of personal plans, which included observations of play, would be welcomed by some parents who in our questionnaire feedback said they would like to see more online entries of their child's play and learning. A staff member highlighted the effectiveness of these audits in highlighting areas for improvement. From the sample of observations we looked at, we agreed that there needed to be a better approach to observations as some children had limited entries.  More work was needed to enhance the quality and timeliness of observations, supporting more informed and responsive care to meet each child's needs and interests.

The setting made use of the local community to enhance children's play and learning.  Forest school's sessions, fostered creativity, curiosity, and deeper connection with nature. Younger children regularly went out on walks within the local community. This contributed to children's sense of belonging and supported them to have new opportunities out with the setting. However, not all parents felt their child had enough opportunities to be involved in outings and had been informed this was due to staff shortages. Management should monitor this, so they can be sure that all children had opportunities to make connections with the wider community.

## 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 setting was comfortable, furnished to a high standard and welcoming. Children had ample space for their care, play and learning needs, giving a strong message that they mattered. The natural light and ventilation created a refreshing atmosphere. Careful consideration had been given to the layout of the playrooms to offer a range of spaces for children to make choices, support their interests and develop their ideas. Staff spoke enthusiastically about changes they had made to create quality play spaces and experiences. As a result, they had created spaces for children to play together or be on their own to help to support their choices and emotional development.

Outdoor play experiences were central to promoting health and wellbeing. The 'swing garden', fondly named by children and staff, provided Eagle and Fox room children opportunities for physical skill development. This promoted risky play, where children assessed their own risks on swings, bikes, large blocks, planks, and a climbing frame. A parent told us, 'My child loves risky play, and this is encouraged safely with lots of climbing, swinging, loose parts play'. Thoughtfully designed spaces included a sand shed, story nook, planting areas, outdoor kitchen, and engaging tuff trays. A parent noted, 'My child enjoys outdoor play daily, even in the rain'. Eagle room children gained access to an additional outdoor area directly from their playroom, with play opportunities such as loose parts, storytelling, and role play. Owl babies accessed their balcony for sand, water play, storytelling, and loose parts play. Moving forward, staff should maintain resources in the Owl baby balcony to ensure consistently high quality experiences in a familiar and supportive environment.

The housekeeper was a valued member of the team who children were fond of, shown through their engaging interactions and warm approach. They supported staff to maintain a clean environment, ensuring the wellbeing of children. This created a nurturing and organised setting, allowing staff to focus on children's care, play and learning without disruptions.

Staff adhered to infection, prevention, and control procedures, including regular hand washing. This helped minimise the risk of spreading illness and infection among staff and children. Children were keen to show us how good they were at washing their hands. Cleaning rotas were maintained to uphold standards throughout the setting. This helped support children's health and wellbeing.

Sleep routines were designed to be calm and relaxing, with staff creating a soothing environment using soft lighting and maintaining a comfortable temperature. A variety of sleeping options including cots, dream coracles, and mats were available, accommodating children's individual sleeping preferences and needs. Safety and comfort were prioritised by monitors, staff presence, and regular physical checks to ensure the wellbeing of children during their rest times.

## 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.**

Since the last inspection in January 2024, the staff team had dedicated significant effort to improve and enhance the setting to a higher standard. Through regular updates and inviting parents into the setting, management had reassured parents that improvements were underway. This had helped to maintained transparency, confirmed by a parent who told us, 'I was reassured to see multiple prompt updates about improvements the team have made following the last inspection and have seen in practice some of these changes being implemented when I have collected my child around dinner time'. Staff expressed how the previous inspection had motivated them to implement the necessary changes. Consequently, staff confidence had grown, leading to more positive outcomes for children and staff alike. Moving forward, management needed to prioritise effective time management to sustain these improvements and drive further progress.

Staff shared with us that they felt valued and heard by their colleagues and management. Management created conditions where staff felt confident to lead on change and bring about improvements. A culture of continuous improvement was clear as staff had a vision of where they wanted to improve and how they were going to achieve this. For example, staff in all three playrooms had been developing the environment and conducted audits to support this improvement. Staff shared the positive impact this had on children's play and learning. This was apparent at the inspection where we observed children following their own ideas, engaged in their play and having fun. Furthermore, the manager had implemented a new resource ordering procedure which encouraged staff to think about the 'why' and the possible learning that they hoped would come from the resource. This supported staff to reflect and think about the way in which they were resourcing their spaces to support children's care, play and learning.

The way in which management had recently used systems for auditing and monitoring had impacted positively on the quality of the setting. However, this was not yet carried out in a systematic way. Some efforts had been made to use the quality improvement tool cycle, Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) but this was in its infancy as staff were still familiarising themselves with the process. The manager was aware that they needed to further support staff to test an idea by temporarily trialling a change and assessing its impact. This would promote and strengthen the culture of continuous improvement that had been implemented.

In our questionnaire feedback, parents expressed confidence in the manager's openness and responsiveness when discussing the setting and receiving feedback. Regular communication through emails and engagement with a parent group ensured transparency and involvement in decision-making processes. Feedback from the parent council, which worked closely with the team, provided opportunities for parents to influence changes and improvements within the setting. Suggestions were actively welcomed and carefully considered, reflecting a collaborative approach that valued parental input and fostered a supportive community spirit. This was echoed by a parent who told us, 'The nursery is an extension of the family so we will take every opportunity to help support it'.

## 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 recognised the importance of nurturing and warm interactions so that children experienced genuine love and care. Parents were complimentary of the staff team and the way in which they cared for their child, example comments being, 'Amazing friendly and nurturing staff. They care and take the time to know what

my kids like and help them settle and thrive at nursery' and 'The staff are wonderful and are always checking in to see how everyone is'. This reflected a nurturing care and support approach from staff.

Recent staff turnover had not gone unnoticed by parents who in our questionnaire feedback, expressed concerns about occasional lapses in introductions to newly employed staff or room changes for their children. To address this, the manager needed to ensure consistent introductions of new and unfamiliar staff to families. This would foster trust and transparency within the setting and a sense of continuity and familiarity for children and their families.

Effective use was made of staff's differing skills and knowledge ensuring that children experienced positive and safe environments throughout the day. The manager ensured staffing arrangements promoted continuity of care as much as possible, contributing to supportive environments for children. In our questionnaire feedback, the majority of parents confirmed satisfaction with staffing levels, noting that their children's needs were consistently met by the right number of staff. One parent specifically highlighted confidence in the setting's ability to maintain adequate ratios despite staff turnover, expressing reassurance that their children were never at risk. This commitment to staffing, continuity and adequate ratios helped ensure children experienced a secure and nurturing environment, whilst enhancing peace of mind for families.

Staff were proud of the work they did, with one telling us 'I am proud of the changes we have made'. This contributed to the positive atmosphere that children and families experienced. Moving forward, management should press on with their plans in continuing to support staff to develop their skills and knowledge, further promoting positive outcomes for children. This would continue to build staff confidence in their role and further enhance children's care, play and learning.

Staff communicated well across the spaces to ensure that they were all working together to best meet the needs of children, for example, staff informed each other and children as they were about to leave play areas. This supported positive relationships as children were reassured as to where key members of staff were and when they would return. As an improvement to the last inspection, staff's main priority was interacting with and supporting children instead of focussing on tasks. This contributed to staff feeling valued and effective supervision and quality engagement with children across the day.

An induction program was in place, however, the manager had not had the time to fully carry it out. Recognising the need for improvement, the manager had already begun developing a new induction program based on the 'Early Learning and Childcare: National Induction Resource. (Scottish Government, 2023).' As noted in Key Question 3.1, the manager now needed to prioritise their time to ensure this essential process was completed. Implementing an improved induction program would enhance staff readiness and confidence in meeting individual children's needs and develop an understanding of ethos and positive culture in the setting.

Staff training and reflective conversations had clearly had a positive impact, contributing to the improvements of the setting. A staff member told us, 'The nursery is striving to be and do better. It's not a case of training people to act a certain way or do certain things for Care Inspectorate, they genuinely want the best for staff, children and families and lessons have been learnt. I would accept nothing less'. Moving forward, the manager needed to ensure that in a timely manner after any future training, staff evaluate and reflect on their learning to fully integrate new knowledge and skills, enhancing the effectiveness and benefits of training. This would help further support the improvement ethos in the setting.

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

### Requirements

#### Requirement 1

By 03 May 2024, the provider must ensure children are nurtured and supported throughout their daily experience. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum ensure:

a) staff receive training so that they can better respond to what children are communication to them
b) management identify and address gaps in staff practice and action any necessary improvements to ensure staff are nurturing in their approach.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 4 (1)(a) (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 that:
'As a child or young person I feel valued, loved and secure' (HSCS 3.10).

**This requirement was made on 24 January 2024.**

**Action taken on previous requirement**
The provider met the requirement to ensure children were nurtured and supported throughout their daily experience by:

a) Training staff to effectively respond to children's communication cues.
b) Providing consistent role modelling and frequent reflective discussions.

These improvements meant children received attentive and supportive care throughout their daily experiences, fostering their emotional wellbeing, happiness and overall development.

**Met - within timescales**

#### Requirement 2

By 03 May 2024, the provider must ensure that all children receive a nutritious meal within a safe unhurried, relaxed and nurturing atmosphere. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum ensure:

a) all children receive a nutritious meal that is in line with good practice guidance
b) supervision of children takes precedence over tasks, prioritising the wellbeing and safety of children
c) management identify and address gaps in staff practice and action any necessary improvements to keep children safe.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 4 (1)(a) (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 that:
'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

**This requirement was made on 24 January 2024.**

### Action taken on previous requirement

The provider met the requirement to ensure all children received a nutritious meal within a safe, unhurried, relaxed, and nurturing atmosphere by:

a) Ensuring all alternative meals were nutritious and aligned with best practice guidelines.
b) Providing training on mealtimes and emphasising the importance of closely supervising children.
c) Maintaining a visible management presence in playrooms to oversee practice and promptly address any gaps in staff practices.

This had positively impacted children by creating a supportive environment where nutritious meals were served in a manner that prioritised their safety and wellbeing. This approach contributed to fostering a positive dining experience and overall development of children.

### 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 promote high quality play and learning, staff should improve on the way they engage and support children in their play and learning.
This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

**This area for improvement was made on 24 January 2024.**

### Action taken since then

As noted in this report, the way in which staff engaged and supported children in their play had significantly improved. A staff member told us they had reflected on their practice and prompted them to be aware of how their interactions were crucial to children's experiences. Staff also shared their learning from training and this was evident in the improved interactions we observed.
**This area of improvement had been met.**

### Previous area for improvement 2

To promote responsive, individualised, and developmentally appropriate routines, the manager and staff should ensure the pace of the day considers and meets the unique needs of each child.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'I am recognised as an expert in my own experiences, needs and wishes' (HSCS 1.9).

**This area for improvement was made on 24 January 2024.**

### Action taken since then

As noted in this report, significant improvements had been made to the pace of the day. Staff now had a clear understanding of how children should experience a routine that matched their needs and stage of development.
**This area of improvement had been met.**

## Previous area for improvement 3

To foster a warm, caring and nurturing environment, management should further develop an effective quality assurance system that brings about positive change, effectively challenges poor practice and raises standards and contributes to positive outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'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 24 January 2024.**

### Action taken since then

As noted in this report, the manager had developed a quality assurance system that had brought about positive change. This was achieved through management presence in playrooms to role model and effectively challenge poor practice. This raised standards and contributed to improved outcomes for children.
**This area of improvement had been met.**

## Previous area for improvement 4

To promote a warm, nurturing atmosphere, staff should improve how they communicate with each other and actively position themselves within spaces to promptly identify and respond to the needs of children. This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:
'People have time to support and care for me and speak to me' (HSCS 3.16).

**This area for improvement was made on 24 January 2024.**

### Action taken since then

As noted in this report, improvements had been made to the way in which staff communicated with each other. They also positioned themselves within spaces to promptly identify and respond to the needs of children, this was especially prominent at mealtimes.
**This area of improvement had been met.**

## Previous area for improvement 5

To improve practice and meet children's needs, staff should have time to meaningfully reflect, highlight and address potential gaps in their practice.
This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which

state that:
'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources' (HSCS 4.27).

**This area for improvement was made on 24 January 2024.**

### Action taken since then

As noted in this report, staff were routinely reflecting on their practice to better meet the needs of children. Staff meetings, private group chats to share ideas and staff heightened awareness of good practice, all contributed to improved outcomes for children.
**This area of improvement had 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 | 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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