

# Thrive Childcare and Education. Corner House - The Grange Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
2 August 2022

**Service provided by:**  
Strawberry Hill Nurseries Limited

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003548

**Service no:**  
CS2003015684

## About the service

Thrive Childcare and Education. Corner House - The Grange is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 100 children between the ages of 3 months and entry into primary school, of whom a maximum of 28 children are aged 3 months to 2 years.

The service is based in the south-side of Edinburgh, located on a busy main road, close to local amenities and public transport links. The service has multiple playrooms across three floors. Babies and toddler playrooms are based across the ground and first floor of the building. Older children use the playrooms on the second floor. Children have access to gardens at the front and rear of the property.

The service is close to local parks, shops and other amenities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 27 July 2022 between 09:40 and 18:15. The inspection was carried out by three 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 older children in service and 11 parents and carers
- spoke with 15 members of staff and three members of the management team
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

Familiar staff supported children through warm and nurturing relationships.

Children had fun through a range of play experiences. Loose parts supported children to be curious and creative.

Older children experienced positive mealtimes, which promoted their independence and confidence.

Staff needed to continue to develop their skills, experience and knowledge to help all children reach their full potential.

The quality of the environment was inconsistent. Improvements were needed to ensure consistently positive experiences for children.

The management team needed to continue to develop the approach to quality assurance to ensure children's health and wellbeing is maintained.

Staff felt supported and valued by the management team, who showed a commitment to making improvements in the service.

Communication with parents and carers had developed since the last inspection. However, for some families communication about children's learning and staffing arrangements was inconsistent and improvements were still needed.

Staff deployment should be improved to ensure the needs of all children are met.

## 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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

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

## How good is our care, play and learning?

## 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where there are strengths, but these are only just outweighed by weaknesses.

### 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children received warm, nurturing care. Familiar staff were kind and responsive, providing cuddles and comfort. This helped children to feel valued. Staff respected children when providing personal care. However, at times some staff did not always have the skills or strategies to consistently support all children. Some children experienced multiple transitions to different staff despite them being upset, while other staff missed cues to effectively support children with communication needs. The management team should continue to support staff to understand their role in sensitively supporting children and promoting positive experiences (see area for improvement 1).

Mealtime experiences varied and at times needed to improve. Older children had positive opportunities to be independent and develop their self-help skills. Staff sat with children at mealtimes promoting their safety. However, younger children and toddlers had limited opportunities to be involved in the mealtime experience. To promote children's independence and skills, the service should continue to review and develop the lunch time experience. All children should have supportive and enriching mealtimes.

Children's health and wellbeing was promoted as dietary and allergy needs were effectively managed. Most staff were knowledgeable about the dietary needs of children, confidently discussing the allergy and what symptoms the child might have. A recent review of allergy management had supported the staff and management team to review and reflect on practice.

Quality assurance in relation to children's medication needed to be reviewed. For one child, there was discrepancies in recording which could have the potential to result in administration errors. To support safe medication arrangements, quality assurance processes relating to medication should continue to be reviewed and improved (see area for improvement 1 in How good is our leadership).

Personal plans, additional support information and learning journals varied in how well they set out strategies of support. For example, for some children strategies were identified but not consistently implemented. Personal planning tools were at times ineffective as they did not always support the monitoring of development, learning and progression for all children. Children would benefit from staff developing their knowledge and skills in how to use support strategies in practice to effectively support children in their play and daily experiences. This improvement is needed to ensure all children are supported to reach their full potential (see area for improvement 1).

### 1.3 Play and learning

Most children had positive opportunities for early mark-making, numeracy development and role-play. Various loose parts materials supported children to investigate and be curious. Younger children had opportunities to explore sensory materials supporting their creativity and curiosity. One parent said, "Our child thrives from messy play! I always love coming to collect him and hearing about all the creative activities he has been up to!".

Some indoor spaces needed to improve to ensure consistently positive play experiences. For example, children in one room enjoyed exploring water with a variety of resources but other play areas were less inviting. This meant children did not meaningfully engage in the rest of the play space. To support a sense of wonder and enrich play across environments, the service should continue to improve the environment to support consistently positive experiences (see area for improvement 1 in How good is our leadership)..

A responsive planning approach valued children's interests. For example, older children were making recipe cards, which promoted their interests in writing and baking. The setting had plans to continue to improve and embed this approach, which could further support the development of high-quality play and learning.

Some staff were confident when extending children's learning during play. Discussions in the garden about flowers supported children's literacy and promoted a sense of wonder. Staff supported children to develop their ideas and have fun. For example, young children used crates to make boats, a staff member joined in singing songs that encouraged fun and laughter. Practice and skills now need embedded to ensure quality play and learning interactions are consistent and sustained.

While there was some progress in how staff were observing, reflecting on, and recording children's learning this was not yet consistent for all children. The quality of observations and next steps within learning journals and floorbooks were inconsistent. This meant staff missed opportunities to evidence children's skills or show where gaps in learning might be. The monitoring and tracking of children's learning and development still needed to improve (see area for improvement 2).

Some parents spoke about children making progress and said they felt included in their child's learning. However, other parents said they would like more opportunities to hear about their child's play and learning. The service should continue to develop the approaches used to support parents to be partners in their child's learning and development journey.

Children did not experience regular trips and outings meaning they missed valuable learning experiences. One parent said, "Children never have trips; they are not included in the local community". The service should develop the opportunities for children to be included in the local community. This is to promote children's sense of belonging and opportunities for learning outside the service.

## Areas for improvement

1. To promote consistently positive and engaging experiences for all children, staff should be supported to develop their confidence, knowledge and skills in understanding their critical role in supporting play and learning. This would include but is not limited to developing a understanding of quality interactions, quality play experiences and the role of the adult.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state: "As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling" (1.30) and "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" (3.14) .

2. To support children to achieve the service should improve the approach and skills of staff in relation to planning for children's learning and tracking and monitoring their progress. Staff should be supported to develop their understanding of how to effectively observe and assess children's learning in order to plan quality learning experiences and meaningful next steps.

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

## How good is our setting?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where there are strengths, but these are only just outweighed by weaknesses.

#### 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The quality of the indoor environments was inconsistent. Some interesting toys and equipment supported children's interests and curiosities, for example loose parts. However, some spaces were less well-resourced and did not always enhance children's play. The service should ensure children experience consistently enabling environments that invite children to engage in meaningful sustained play (see area for improvement in How good is our leadership).

Playrooms were bright and well ventilated. This promoted the flow of fresh air. Homely spaces had been developed and children used these to relax and rest. Soft furnishings such as rugs and cushions were used to create cosy areas on the floor. This supported children's comfort.

While most outdoor areas were safe and well-maintained improvements were needed to the checking and monitoring of gardens. On the day of the inspection, one of the gardens used by younger children was littered with debris, including tissues and crisp packets. This did not create an inviting space to play (see area for improvement in How good is our leadership).

There were inconsistencies in the quality of cleanliness, which had the potential to compromise children's wellbeing. For example, areas within the lunchroom for older children were stained. At times, older children did not have sufficient supplies of hand washing items. One nappy changing area was not clean due to a build up of debris and dust. While some parents said they felt the environment was clean, another parent told us they felt the setting was "dirty". One parent described a playroom as "unloved". Evidence provided by the service showed that following the last inspection improvements had been made to environments. However, at the time of this inspection the service had not effectively maintained the improvements. Quality assurance processes and regular monitoring of the environment needed to better identify and address issues so that children experience an environment that is consistently clean and respectful (see area for improvement 1 in How good is our leadership).

## How good is our leadership?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where there are strengths, but these are only just outweighed by weaknesses.

#### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are well led

The management team were enthusiastic about creating conditions where all staff shared a positive vision for children's care. The vision and aims of the service valued the importance of play and learning. Many staff spoke passionately about their enjoyment of working with children and how they wanted children to experience positive outcomes. Staff said they felt valued by the management team. This supported the development of a positive ethos.

The service improvement plans identified key priorities and action points. The plans reflected the needs of the service and set out how outcomes for children should improve. Staff were encouraged to be involved in the self-evaluation process. For example, through regular team meetings and support sessions. However, the processes to support self-evaluation and improvement planning were not yet leading to sustained improvement across all aspects of the service. For example, the quality of play environments and staff interactions remained inconsistent. To support improved outcomes for children, self-evaluation and improvement planning needed to be more firmly embedded (see area for improvement 1).

The quality of children's experiences remained inconsistent, and elements of quality assurance still needed to improve. The service had developed the range of quality assurance processes since the last inspection. For example, learning journal audits and observations of staff practice were regularly conducted. Staff told us these processes helped them to develop and improve as they received guidance and praise from the management team. While positive steps had been taken to improve quality assurance processes, these were not yet leading to consistent and sustained improvement. To support and embed a cycle of continuous improvement, the provider should ensure quality assurance processes further develop so that improvements are meaningful and sustained (see area for improvement 1).

The range and frequency of communication strategies used by the service had increased since the last inspection. However, communication with parents particularly in relation to children's learning and staffing remained inconsistent. For example, a parent had been informed of their child's new keyworker but when this person left, no further update had been provided. This can cause parents to feel unsettled and misinformed. To ensure communication methods have a meaningful impact for parents, the service should continue to develop and embed the way parents are included in the service (see area for improvement 2).

While some parents shared positive feedback with one parent saying, "we could not be happier with the amount of love, support and high standard of care our child receives each day". Other parents expressed concerns about the quality of the service and their children's experiences. One parent said, "In the last three months there seems to be a big slip, it is really chaotic and not the same level of care". The service should continue to gather and act upon feedback from parents and children to support the improvement journey (see area for improvement 2).

## Areas for improvement

1. To make and sustain positive changes the service should develop and enhance the current approaches to improvement planning, quality assurance and self-evaluation. This is to promote a culture of continuous improvement so that outcomes for children and families can be as positive as possible.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state: "I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes" (4.19).

2. To ensure parents and carers are fully included in the life of the service and their children's experiences and care, communication strategies should be improved.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state "I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed (4.23)"

## How good is our staff team?

## 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where there are strengths, but these are only just outweighed by weaknesses.

### 4.3 Staff Deployment

Staff deployment took account of children's safety. For example, staff were flexible and supportive of each other and would work in other playrooms across the day to support the supervision of children. However, the deployment of staff did not always effectively support a continuity of care for all children. Some children who were distressed had frequent changes in the adults who are caring for them. Decisions about the deployment of staff should consider the number of different adults children are cared for throughout the day. Improvements in the management of staff deployment could support children to experience consistently nurturing experiences (see area for improvement in How good is our leadership).

Recent changes in the staff team meant the service had to rely on temporary, relief staff to maintain staff to child ratios. The management team had worked hard to ensure relief staff attending the service were familiar and consistent. However, the frequent changes in staffing did mean some children's experiences were inconsistent. For example, not all staff were confident supporting children who needed help to communicate. Some parents said the high turnover of staff had a detrimental impact on their confidence in the service and at times their children's wellbeing. One parent said, "There have been so many staff changes that this seems to affect the level of care and support they are able to offer as there are always different staff members in the room who won't know children's care plans".

At times, staff deployment did have a negative impact on children's play and learning. For example, older children did not have regular, free-flow access to the garden due to staffing within their playroom. To ensure children experience consistent opportunities to explore the world outdoors staff deployment should be further considered, and solutions found to manage this (see area for improvement in How good is our leadership).

Most core staff had taken part in learning that supported them to meet children's needs. For example, child protection training had helped staff to understand protection issues and be clear on how to report concerns about children's wellbeing. Due to changes across the staff team, further opportunities were needed for all staff to build on learning and reflect on their practice. For example, in relation to developing staff skills in engaging with children who may require additional support.

New staff received an induction into their role and told us that this had helped them to understand children's care needs and the routines of the day. This helped them to build an understanding of their roles and responsibilities when caring for children. The management team should continue to build on the approach to supporting new and relief staff so that children experience consistent, positive 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 promote consistently positive and engaging experiences for all children staff should be supported to develop their confidence, knowledge and skills in understanding their critical role in supporting play and learning. This would include but is not limited to developing a understanding of quality interactions, quality play experiences and the role of the adult.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state: "As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling" (1.30) and "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" (3.14) .

**This area for improvement was made on 16 August 2021.**

#### Action taken since then

Some staff had developed their skills and confidence in understanding quality interactions and the role of the adult. However, of this area for improvement still needed to continue to develop and improve.

This area for improvement has been continued at this inspection.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

To support children to achieve the service should improve the approach and skills of staff in relation to planning for children's learning and tracking and monitoring their progress. Staff should be supported to develop their understanding of how to effectively observe and assess children's learning in order to plan quality learning experiences and meaningful next steps.

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

**This area for improvement was made on 16 August 2021.**

#### Action taken since then

The service had made some progress in relation to planning for children's play and learning. However, staff skills and practice in relation to tracking and monitoring children's learning and progress still needed to develop. Observations varied in quality and for many children learning and progress had not been consistently and meaningfully tracked. Ongoing work was needed to further support this area for improvement.

This area for improvement has been continued at this inspection.

## Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure parents and carers are fully included in the life of the service and their children's experiences and care, communication strategies should be improved.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state "I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed" (4.23).

**This area for improvement was made on 16 August 2021.**

### Action taken since then

Although the range and frequency of communication strategies had improved, some parents did not feel included in the life of the service or their children's experiences. For some children updates on their learning and development remained inconsistent. Not all parents felt informed about changes in staffing arrangements.

This area for improvement has been continued at this inspection.

## Previous area for improvement 4

To make and sustain positive changes the service should develop and enhance the current approaches to improvement planning, quality assurance and self-evaluation. This is to promote a culture of continuous improvement so that outcomes for children and families can be as positive as possible.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state: "I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes" (4.19).

**This area for improvement was made on 16 August 2021.**

### Action taken since then

This inspection recognised that the management team had worked hard to develop the service and make improvements. However, the quality of the service and children's experiences remained inconsistent. Approaches to improvement planning, self-evaluation and quality assurance needed to be further enhanced and embedded to support the service to make and sustain positive changes.

This area for improvement has been continued at this inspection.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	3 - Adequate
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.3 Staff deployment	3 - Adequate

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