

Happy Days at Hardengreen Day Care of Children

Hardengreen House
Eskbank
Dalkeith
EH22 3LF

Telephone: 01316 600 168

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 July 2023

Service provided by:
Genesis (J & T) Limited

Service provider number:
SP2010011218

Service no:
CS2015334818

About the service

Happy Days at Hardengreen, referred to as the nursery in this report, is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 130 children at any one time. Of those 130 no more than 40 are aged under 2; No more than 25 are aged 2 to under 3; No more than 45 are aged 3 to those not yet of primary school age and; No more than 20 are of primary school age.

The outdoor space has been taken into account when agreeing the maximum number of children aged from three months to leaving primary school age. Children must have access to the outdoor space at all times.

The nursery is located on the outskirts of Dalkeith in Midlothian and situated in a large, detached house set amongst approximately five acres of ground. Playrooms are arranged to accommodate babies, beanies, toddlers, early learners and school aged children. In addition to the main building the toddler children used a cabin building in the grounds and school aged children used the 'Treehouse' as their dedicated playrooms.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 4 July 2023 between 9:00 and 15:15 and an announced visit on 6 July between 9:00 and 15:30. 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 in the nursery
- received comments from four parents
- spoke with staff, the manager and providers
- observed staff practice and experiences of children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children had positive attachments with staff who made them feel confident and secure.
- Children's play and learning would benefit from staff who increased their skills in planning for play for children under three years.
- Children's learning would be enhanced by an increased staff knowledge of extending learning through effective interactions, comments and questions.
- Procedures in place for self-evaluation and continuous improvement were improving outcomes for children.
- To develop the skill of the staff team the manager and provider had identified increased training opportunities for staff.
- The staff team held the need to provide positive outcomes for children as their most important aim.

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?	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?

3 - Adequate

Overall we evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

We evaluated this quality indicator as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children benefitted from care provided by a staff team who were kind and caring. Throughout the nursery interactions during care routines and whilst supporting children who were upset were respectful and calm. As a result children went easily to staff for cuddles and they were confident and secure around staff and visitors.

Staff were on the whole providing a good level of responsive care to meet children's needs. The system for personal planning was used to gather a range of information about children's care and support. Staff we spoke to knew children well but the personal plan had not always been referred to when following children's routines. There were some individual support plans for children but many did not describe the action that staff needed to take. Recent changes to the personal planning system would enable staff to further develop the personal planning strategies to ensure that the individual support was described. This would help all staff to know what actions were needed to ensure that each child was well supported and cared for.

To promote children's safety and wellbeing there were policies and procedures to ensure the safe storage and administration of medication and guidance and procedures for child protection. Some staff were more confident in their knowledge of these procedures than others for example, staff knew the procedure for reporting concerns to senior staff but were not confident about the wider procedures that should be followed. They also knew that medication should be signed in and recorded but they were not consistent in which forms they used as part of the recording (see area for improvement 1.)

Children had access to meals which were varied and met current healthy eating guidance. The lunch time procedure for early learners provided them with a valuable and sociable experience where they could choose when to come for lunch, serve their food and sit with their friends to chat and review their morning activities. Children were very familiar with this lunch time routine which provided very good opportunities for independence. Overall, children in the younger age groups had a positive mealtime experience and to enhance this further we suggested that staff could refer to good practice guidance in Setting the Table and on the Care Inspectorate HUB.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

We evaluated this quality indicator as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

Playrooms for each of the age groups were attractively set out to provide children with varied learning environments. Children spent a significant period of time outdoors and work was needed to further develop some of the learning opportunities in these areas to ensure that they provided rich learning environments for example, staff needed to ensure that areas such as the water tray had a range of resources for children to use and mud kitchens could be further developed to include a wider range of tools such as scales, recipes and measuring equipment to enhance literacy and numeracy.

Children were having fun and most were engaged in their chosen activities. Staff took time to support children's play but more confidence and expertise was needed in the area of extending children's learning through comments and observations for example, some staff were using closed questions which resulted in children being quizzed rather than extending their learning. Staff need to develop their skills in using interactions to effectively promote children's curiosity and creativity (see area for improvement 2.)

Some staff provided good role models for the less experienced team members in how to lead and promote play. The manager and provider had identified that the staff understanding of play and child development needed to be further improved and plans were in place to provide training and reflective practice discussions. This would help staff to further understand the importance of play and the play ethos in the nursery.

Improvements to the process for planning children's play in the 3-5 age group had continued and staff had developed a good overview of each child's learning and development. Staff were using floor books as a method of recording children's play and the learning outcomes. Staff needed to ensure that these books were up to date and completed with children to ensure that their comments and learning were fully represented.

Planning for play for younger children needed to be further adapted and developed, as some staff were not clear about the planning for play process or which documents were being used to identify learning outcomes. We have signposted staff to documents such as Realising the Ambition - Being Me, which would help them to develop an outcome focussed system and help them track the opportunities to develop learning and skills (see area for improvement 3.)

Staff had shared observations of children's play and learning with parents through the digital platform. Improvements had been made to the frequency and quality of these observations. The senior team were aware that this was an area that needed to be monitored to ensure consistency and quality.

Areas for improvement

1. Children's health and welfare should be well understood and promoted by staff. In order to do this all staff should be familiar with the procedures and good practice guidance for child protection. The nursery medication recording procedures should also be re-visited with staff.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities.' (HSCS 3.20) 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.' (HSCS 3.14)

2. To promote children's learning and development through play, the manager should support staff in developing their skills in interactions which will extend children's learning and experiences.

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

3. To enable staff to respond to children's development and learning needs, staff should develop a planning approach which clearly identifies learning and development outcomes.

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

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 premises provided children with a bright and comfortable environment. Overall, the layout of the rooms supported children's choice in how to play for example, there were different zones for messy play, role play, construction and quieter cosy areas for reading or doing puzzles. Resources were developmentally appropriate and easily accessible to children further supporting their choice and independence. We asked the provider and manager to re-assess the use of the new Toddler 1 space as this did not provide children with enough room for their play. It would provide a valuable space for lunches, sleeping or group activities.

The outdoor areas were a significant strength of the premises and provided space to play, climb and run. Risk assessment procedures were in place to mitigate risks. Older children helped with the risk assessment process and there were good discussions about acceptable risk, keeping yourself safe and how actions could impact on others. Older children had opportunities to take part in risky play using the zip wire and wooded area. The use of loose parts enabled younger children to build structures to climb and balance on, helping them understand what they were capable of.

Children played outdoors for the majority of the day. This supported their development and wellbeing. Free flow access to outdoor areas were provided for after school, 3-5 years and the 2-3 year old children. The youngest children in Beanies and Babies did not have free flow but staff ensured that children spent significant periods of time outdoors for example, babies had lunch outdoors on our second visit and had opportunities to sleep/rest in small tents.

The provider had a plan of refurbishment for the nursery building as it was a very large premises and in regular need of upgrading. Nappy changing areas had been recently re-furbished to promote privacy and dignity for the youngest children. Some work was needed to the bathroom used by the 3-5 year old children to ensure that it met the guidance in Space to Grow. The provider agreed to share the plan of refurbishment and timescales for completion with us.

There were good procedures in place for the prevention of infections. Playrooms and communal areas were clean and well maintained. Staff and children washed their hands regularly with soap and running water. The kitchen area was clean and had recently been passed in an inspection by environmental health.

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.

The provider, manager and staff were in the process of updating the nursery vision, values and aims to reflect the aspirations for children and families that attend the nursery. Parents told us that they felt they and their children were involved in developing the service and that staff used their ideas and suggestions to make changes in the service. "I am often given feedback forms from staff about the nursery which is great that they value our feedback." There were questionnaires available for parents to complete at the front entrance. There was limited context available about the purpose of these and we discussed with the manager the need to ensure consultation was meaningful and had impact.

Children's voice was beginning to be identified in the floor book. Staff were responsive to children's needs and requests but staff needed to continue to develop ways in which they could meaningfully consult with children to influence self-evaluation and continuous improvement.

To promote consistency of practice and develop the staff team, the manager and provider had developed an approach to staff meetings which provided opportunities for reflective practice discussions and staff development. Staff strongly agreed they had opportunities to attend one to one meetings with the manager. The staff appraisal process was in depth and included peer reviews and discussion about professional practice and development.

Children were beginning to benefit from a culture of continuous improvement and ongoing development within the nursery. There were areas where this had a significant impact for example, the opportunities for training and improved team working. The manager and provider were an effective and enthusiastic team and had developed evaluation systems and processes, including an improvement plan and several monitoring systems. We suggested to the provider and manager that they could re-assess the pace of change in the nursery, to ensure that they and the staff group have time to fully understand and embed changes and improvements.

While safer recruitment records were generally well maintained, we noted some inconsistencies in staff personal files. The manager should monitor the information in staff files to ensure that it provides evidence of robust recruitment procedures and induction.

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.

Children were cared for by staff who understood the need to form positive and warm relationships with them. The staff team had a range of differing skills, knowledge and expertise. Some staff provided positive role models for less experienced staff. The provider and manager were aware of the need to continue training and developing staff, to enable them to meet the needs of children in their care.

Staff were flexible in their approach and supported each other to work as a team to benefit children. Staff communicated well with each other to ensure that children were well supervised. Staff who responded to our questionnaire strongly agreed that team work was strong in the nursery. "The staff team, we are very close and supportive of each other and that's all down to the management team." and "Staff help one another and support when other need help. Management is great and also willing to help."

The four parents who responded to our questionnaire all commented that the staff group were one of the strengths of the nursery. Comments included: "The staff are so welcoming!", "The staff are great at caring for my daughter, she talks about staff members at home and is always happy to attend nursery!", "Very friendly and helpful" and "Lovely staff team!! Great with my child, there has been some new faces recently but this is posted on Family in the weekly post that they do to keep us informed".

A few new members of staff had been employed since our last inspection. Some from another of the provider's nurseries and some who were new to childcare and the company. Now that the staff group was more settled and familiar with their roles and responsibilities, the manager and provider were working to develop staff teams to provide consistency of care for children. The deployment of staff took account of qualification, skills and experience to ensure that children's needs could be met. The manager and provider were developing leadership roles for those who were showing ability to lead and provide positive role models for staff.

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 support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the provider should ensure that information about children's development and learning is recorded and shared with parents.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I am supported to achieve my potential in education.' (HSCS 1.27)

This area for improvement was made on 27 July 2022.

Action taken since then

Children's learning was shared with parents through the floor books and the digital platform. The observations of children's learning were on the whole more frequent. We talked to the manager about the need to ensure staff had time to complete observations and that the manager and room seniors needed to monitor the quality of observations.

This area for improvement was met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the provider should ensure staff access training appropriate to their role and apply their training in practice. This should include but is not limited to, training that will support staff in how to record and assess children's progress.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled.' (HSCS 3.14)

This area for improvement was made on 27 July 2022.

Action taken since then

As part of the self-evaluation process the manager and provider identified that staff would benefit from additional training in child development and play. Opportunities for training had been significantly increased and opportunities for staff to share their reflections provided. Work needed to continue in this area but this was now well planned.

This area for improvement was 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?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate

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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