

# Little Hawthorn Loanhead Day Care of Children

16 Hawthorn Gardens  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
27 November 2023

**Service provided by:**  
Natalie Hollerin

**Service provider number:**  
SP2005007217

**Service no:**  
CS2005088311

## About the service

Little Hawthorn Loanhead is an early learning and childcare setting situated in Midlothian close to transport links, shops and community services. The service provides a daycare of children service to a maximum of 36 children aged birth to five years.

Children are cared for in playrooms on the ground floor of the detached building and a sleep room is situated upstairs. There is a large enclosed garden to the rear of the building, with a separate area for the younger children. There are toilets, nappy changing facilities, kitchen and an office.

The service has a partnership agreement with Midlothian Council to provide funded early learning and childcare.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 15 November 2023 between the hours of 8:50 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 10 children using the service and we received written feedback from 10 parents.
- spoke with 9 staff and management, including the nursery cook.
- observed practice and daily routines.
- reviewed documents

We gave feedback to the manager and Midlothian Council support teacher on 23 November 2023 and 27 November 2023.

## Key messages

- Children experienced warm and nurturing care to support their wellbeing.
- Children had fun with and were given a broad range of experiences.
- Parents were complimentary of the staff and management teams.
- Management showed a commitment to continuous improvement in the setting to promote good outcomes for children.
- The provider should further support management in the nursery.

## 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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very 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 Care and nurture.

We evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Staff understood the importance of nurture, attachment, and keeping children safe. They used their knowledge to build positive and trusting relationships with children and their families. Children were treated with warmth and kindness by the staff who cared for them. One parent commented "my child has strong bonds with staff and is very happy there".

Staff worked closely with families before starting the service. This enabled them to develop meaningful personal plans which reflected children's individual needs and preferences. Children's personal plans had been reviewed regularly. Children were supported throughout their daily experiences and personal care routines were carried out sensitively and respectfully. Daily diaries were used to support staff in caring for younger children and shared with parents. These included sleep pattern, food eaten, personal care details and what the child had been doing at nursery. One parent told us "staff show a genuine interest in my child and their development".

Children were well supported by staff who had methods for recording important information about children, through chronologies. Staff were able to identify what individualised support was necessary, and how this was impacting on the outcomes for the child. One parent told us "I am very confident with the level of care and find that my child thrives from this nursery".

Children benefitted from snacks and meals which were made on the premises. Children ate in their playroom and were offered a healthy and varied menu. Mealtimes were well planned to provide opportunities for some children to develop independence, choice, and social skills. However, the manager agreed to review pre school lunch times in order to further promote children's independence and ensure lunch was a positive experience for all children. Children were provided with access to water at all times to ensure they remained well hydrated.

Children were being well supported to develop an understanding of their emotions and were starting to self-regulate. They were supported to recognize how their behaviour could impact other children. Staff told us "children's needs always come first".

Transition sheets were completed for children transitioning from room to room. These were completed by keyworkers and included a child's care needs, confidence, behaviour and interests. This ensured children's needs were met as they progressed.

The health and wellbeing of children was well supported by good procedures for the administration of medication and recording of accidents and incidents. These were audited to ensure children's safety and wellbeing.

## Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and learning

We evaluated this quality indicator as Good.

Children's needs and interests were catered for through provision of resources, activities and experiences. Management and staff had worked hard in these areas since their last inspection and this had a positive impact on children's play, learning and fun. Environmental review books had been introduced for staff to reflect and evaluate areas within rooms to promote further experiences for children. For example, this month baby room staff focused on playdough provision and had requested additional resources to promote positive outcomes for children. One parent told us "Staff are very detailed about what my child has learnt that day and what they have been up to".

Play and learning was promoted through a balance of responsive and planned experiences. Staff evaluated and reflected on planning to ensure it was relevant and met children's interests and learning outcomes. Possible lines of development were identified for each child and staff brought these to life by offering varied experiences. For example, outdoor water play and was extended by staff to include numeracy, balance and resources. Staff gathered a range of evidence to track a child's development and learning. Further reference could be made of the many learning opportunities children had access to outdoors. We highlighted the Growing My Potential guidance which promoted learning experiences and environments for young children. Management agreed to actively engage with this guidance.

Resources such as sand, water, paint, mark making, construction, role-play and loose parts play were available both indoors and outside. As a result, children were happy and active as they could make choices and engage in activities that interested them. Opportunities to make music and develop story telling and drama further enhanced play and learning. One parent commented "Lots of toys and fun. Activities for my child's age".

Children benefitted from a range of outdoor experiences. For example, climbing, balancing, constructing, digging, singing and reading stories. Children could develop a sense of their local community as the outings book evidenced they had visited local parks and woods developing an awareness of different seasons and the world around them. Staff told us "children had the best time in the woods" as they explored, problem solved and became aware of benefits of risky play.

Good opportunities for children to learn about number and language were provided. For example, alphabet song, displays and number games. Environmental print was used, as were books, magazines and opportunities for mark making and writing. Staff had seen the benefits of using the Up, up and away resource with some children as an assessment of both child and the literacy environment.

Learning information was regularly shared with parents through digital learning journals. Staff were confident on how to complete these. Children were empowered to be involved in their play and learning through the skilled interactions of staff. Staff held reflective discussions at team meetings which helped to create a consistent approach to supporting children's learning. The manager talked about "having all the fundamentals in place" and using a scaffolding system to promote and record children's learning.

## How good is our setting?

## 3 - Adequate

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

## Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a nursery environment that was well furnished, comfortable and homely. They were confident moving around the nursery. This showed us they felt safe and secure. The use of attractive displays and children's work, promoted discussion and encouraged children to re-visit their learning experiences. Parents told us the environment "has a very homely feel and my child learns a lot" and "has a friendly and relaxed atmosphere".

Indoor spaces were safe, secure, and provided developmentally appropriate spaces. As a result, children experienced an environment tailored to develop their natural curiosities and provided a calm and fun play space. Some maintenance had been attended too since the last inspection. Maintenance such as flooring was in progress. Staff were responsible for ensuring children were kept healthy and safe during their time in nursery. They did this by wearing appropriate personal protective equipment and ensuring resources were clean. Overall the nursery environment would benefit from more general cleaning. For example, dusty skirting boards. (see area for improvement 1)

Outdoor spaces were a work in progress as detailed in the nursery improvement plan. Staff worked well together to address some of the outdoor issues. For example, building a sand pit but were still waiting on sand being delivered. Outdoor decking could be slippery and a number of minor accidents had been recorded for the younger children. (see area for Improvement 1) Risk assessments were in place and management were aware of potential safety issues. The supervised outdoor spaces offered children ample space to be active and have fun. The outdoor classroom was appropriately resourced and offered children sheltered play whilst benefitting from being outside in the fresh air.

One requirement was made at the last inspection regarding toilet and nappy changing facilities. This had been met. However, nappy changing areas should be continually reviewed and amended in order to ensure guidance was being followed. (see area for improvement 2)

Staff should continue to ensure the respect and dignity of all children as they reviewed changing arrangements. Toilets and nappy changing facilities were kept clean throughout the day and promoted children's wellbeing.

Children were confident moving around the nursery. This showed us they felt safe and secure. The supervised outdoor spaces offered children ample space to be active and have fun. The outdoor classroom was appropriately resourced and offered children sheltered play whilst benefitting from being outside in the fresh air.

Staff and children were involved in risk assessing the indoor and outdoor spaces. This gave them a sense of responsibility in caring for their environment and keeping themselves safe. Children were encouraged to look after the environment and resources.

Staff had a good understanding of confidentiality and this was reflected in their communication with parents. Children's information such as care plans and registration information were kept securely. Sensitive information was only shared with those who needed the information to meet children's needs. This meant, protection of children's information complied with relevant best practice.

Infection prevention control measures were in place to ensure consistent approaches to health and safety across the nursery. Staff positively reinforced the need for good hygiene with children by offering words of encouragement and role modelling good handwashing practice.

## Areas for improvement

1. The provider should review general cleaning practice within the nursery.

In addition they should make sure the decking areas are safe for the children to use, to reduce the amount of accident in this area.

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)

2. The provider should continue to review nappy changing facilities meet the required standards and good practice is being followed.

This to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state:

'If I require intimate personal care, there is a suitable area for this, including a sink if needed (HSCS 5.4)

'The premises have been adapted, equipped and furnished to meet my needs and wishes' (HSCS 5.18)

This is to comply with best practice guidance, Nappy changing facilities for early learning and childcare services: information to support improvement' (Care Inspectorate: July 2023).

## 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.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The management and staff team worked well together to ensure a positive ethos within the nursery. The shared values, aims and vision of the service were evident in the interactions between staff and children.

It was evident the manager and depute manager were enthusiastic about making improvements and worked closely with staff to ensure their understanding of how they promoted best outcomes for children. The manager appreciated the ongoing support from Midlothian Council.

Self-evaluation was effective with formal and informal monitoring taking place. Staff contributed effectively to the ongoing improvements within the nursery, as they were encouraged to review their own practice, identifying strengths and next steps in learning. This was evident in peer assessments and demonstrated a reflective and considered approach to the development of the service.

The nursery improvement plan identified priorities to support the service's improvement agenda. For example, outdoor provision was still being developed. Two parents told us that they would like to be involved in a meaningful way to develop the setting. Another commented they were "kept informed of all updates"

and staff were "willing to take feedback on board".

Parents evenings and stay and play sessions were well attended and parents welcomed these. However, they did not come into the nursery at drop off and pick up times. One parent told us "feel it would be beneficial for parents to be able to access the building and see what children are doing". The manager took this on board and agreed to address this.

The manager and senior staff were responsible for carrying out staff professional development reviews. Training opportunities were well tracked and their impact on practice assessed. In addition, staff used the regular team meetings to participate in training, discuss and reflect on their practice and plan for children's experiences. As a result, children experienced support and learning opportunities that met their needs. Professional reviews helped to improve wellbeing and build a positive and supportive working environment. The manager did not get regular professional development reviews and although they demonstrated the ability to take issues forward, the nursery provider should further support them through changes and have a clear oversight of quality assurance to support improvement. (see area for improvement 1)

## Areas for improvement

1.  
The provider should carry out regular professional developmental reviews with the manager in order to support their personal development. The provider should support the manager and staff team through nursery changes, and have a clear oversight of quality assurance, to support improvement.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state:

I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed. (HSCS 4.23)

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator very good.

### Quality indicator 4.3 - staff deployment

During our visit there was a lovely atmosphere about the nursery with happy children who were fully engaged in their play. Staffing levels ensured there were sufficient staff to meet the needs of children. We observed a confident and knowledgeable staff team who were respectful and supportive of each other. Positive role modelling between staff helped children develop positive and understand supportive relationships. Staff told us "I feel staff know all the children inside out and only want the best for them" and "we work well as a team"

Effective arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day which ensured very good transitions. Effective communication between staff when leaving an area or playroom helped ensure supervision of children during daily routines and play as there was enough staff to focus on children's needs. Staff breaks were planned and supported management to minimise the impact on children whilst enabling staff to have some time away from their role.

Staff told us they felt supported by management and each other. They had different skills and interests



which worked well together to create positive outcomes for children. Parents spoke positively about the staff and comments included "all staff are extremely friendly", "professional and helpful", "caring and kind", "always upbeat" and "they are all amazing".

An effective keyworker system promoted strong links between home and nursery. Families and children were kept informed of who would be caring for their child. This meant staff were able to develop positive attachments with children and provide very good levels of individual care and support. Parents told us information sharing from the nursery was very good and informative.

Staff were welcoming and actively participated in the inspection process. Their engagement meant we were able to find out more about life in the setting and staff roles within it. The manager told us the wellbeing of staff was of great importance and there was a good ethos of staff attendance. This meant staff felt supported and valued and promoted positive experiences for children across the day.

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

### Requirements

#### Requirement 1

By 23 December 2022, the provider must demonstrate what actions will be taken to ensure nappy changing facilities for children under two years comply with best practice guidance and protect children from the risk of infection. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) submit a plan to the Care Inspectorate of how they intend to improve nappy changing facilities for children under two years to ensure these meet with best practice guidance
- b) provide a date when the improvement works will be completed

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:

'If I require intimate personal care, there is a suitable area for this, including a sink if needed (HSCS 5.4)

'The premises have been adapted, equipped and furnished to meet my needs and wishes' (HSCS 5.18)

This is to comply with best practice guidance, Nappy changing facilities for early learning and childcare services: information to support improvement' (Care Inspectorate: June 2018).

**This requirement was made on 4 November 2022.**

## Action taken on previous requirement

The plan had been submitted and detailed the improvement work to be carried out. The work had been completed. However, due to changes in nappy changing guidance we have made an area for improvement in this report in quality indicator 2.2.

**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 ensure children experience an environment which is well-maintained, the provider should carry out an assessment of the premises and complete all maintenance tasks. This should include but is not limited to, interior redecoration, replacing worn flooring, replacing broken light fittings and ensuring all furniture and furnishings are clean. The provider should also develop an effective system which enables maintenance tasks to be completed in a timely manner.

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 4 November 2022.**

### Action taken since then

Environment maintenance had been carried out. There was new flooring in the conservatory and lighting had been fixed. Plans were in place to continue the maintenance schedule. Improvement plans highlighted further environmental development.

This area for improvement had been met.

### Previous area for improvement 2

To promote children's learning and development, the provider should ensure all children benefit from spaces and experiences which are inviting and stimulating. This should include, but is not limited to, supporting the manager and staff to improve the outdoor environment for children aged over two years.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) 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' (HSCS 1.30)

'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.31)

**This area for improvement was made on 4 November 2022.**

#### Action taken since then

The staff team have worked hard to ensure children benefit from spaces and experiences which were inviting and stimulating. What we saw when we visited the nursery, the environmental reviews and improvement planning provided evidence to support this

This area for improvement had been met. However, we have made an area for improvement in quality indicator 3.1 in relation to provider support.

#### Previous area for improvement 3

To support children's health and wellbeing, the provider should make improvements to the toilet and nappy changing facilities for children over two years old to protect their privacy and dignity.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state:

'If I require intimate personal care, this is carried out in a dignified way, with my privacy and personal preferences respected' (HSCS 1.4)

**This area for improvement was made on 4 November 2022.**

#### Action taken since then

Changes had been made to the toilet and nappy changing areas. Staff told us privacy and dignity was respected by changing one child at a time in the area. We have made an area for development in quality indicator 2.2 in relation to nappy changing.

This area for development 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](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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