

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

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 December 2025

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 daycare of children 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 floor of the building, with an additional playroom located on the second floor. Older children use the playrooms on the top floor of the building. There are nappy changing facilities on the ground level and toilets across all floors.

Children have access to gardens at the front and rear of the property.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 2 December 2025 between 09:25 and 18:05. We returned to the service on Wednesday 3 December between 09:05 and 16:15.

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 using the service and three parents/carers onsite,
- received 12 completed questionnaires from staff and 14 from parents/carers,
- spoke with staff and management,
- observed practice and children's experiences,
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvement is necessary within the headings: 'Leadership' and 'Children are supported to achieve'.

During this inspection we gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning.

This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Overall, staff provided nurturing care and support that promoted children's wellbeing.
- Children experienced a warm, welcoming, well-equipped environment that reflected their needs.
- Children enjoyed a wide range of core play experiences that promoted curiosity, creativity, and sustained engagement.
- Improved quality assurance processes led to better outcomes for children and families.
- Staff deployment needed to improve to ensure staffing arrangements consistently met the varying needs of all children.
- To promote consistently high-quality support for all children, the provider should enable staff to further develop their skills, knowledge and confidence in key areas of practice such as planning for children's learning and child development theory.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

Leadership	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

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

Leadership 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

We evaluated different parts of this heading as good and adequate/satisfactory, with an overall evaluation of adequate, where strengths in this aspect of work just outweigh the weaknesses.

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The service's vision and values encouraged staff to work together and focus on children's wellbeing and play. Supportive leadership helped staff to feel confident and created a positive atmosphere. The service was finding ways to involve families and gather feedback about their child's experiences. For example, recent 'stay and play' sessions let parents see improvements in play areas and spend time playing with their child. Moving forward, the service should keep developing its vision, so parents, children, and other stakeholders are included and share the same aims and values.

Since the last inspection, quality assurance processes at service and provider level had improved, leading to better outcomes for children. For example, audits had supported more engaging play spaces and practice observations had resulted in older children enjoying positive mealtimes. However, some processes were inconsistent and resulted in missed opportunities to provide staff with useful feedback. For example, some audits were incomplete or lacked action points. To secure continuous improvement, the management team and staff should strengthen their skills in quality assurance to ensure processes are consistently meaningful and effective. While further development was needed, overall, quality assurance processes had improved and aided the service to monitor and enhance standards. As a result, a previous improvement related to quality assurance was met.

Since the last inspection, the service had focused on making positive changes to improve outcomes for children. The working improvement plan at the time of the inspection, reflected what the service needed to develop and set out how this would be achieved. Although it was in the early stages of implementation, this plan reflected the current needs of the service. For example, it identified and planned for how staff would be supported to develop their skills in understanding child development theory and effectively planning for children's learning. Moving forward, the service should continue to develop the approaches to improvement planning across all aspects of the service to ensure consistency in quality. For example, further work was needed to ensure staff deployment improved to support consistently positive outcomes for all children. While this had been an action in the previous improvement plan, positive progress had not been fully achieved.

Recruitment procedures were well-organised and followed national best practice. This helped to keep children safe. New staff had mentors to help them settle in and learn about the service. Some inductions were robust and effective, supporting staff development and confidence in their roles. However, not all staff inductions were consistently robust. For example, some staff had not had regular meetings with managers or mentors. There were limited observations of staff practice during the induction period, meaning there were missed opportunities to assess practice and offer support. To support a competent and skilled workforce, the management team should continue reviewing induction processes to make sure they are consistent and provide meaningful support to staff.

Quality indicator: Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

Staff had developed their skills in nurturing care and creating enabling environments. This was supporting some improved outcomes for children in relation to the care provided and their play opportunities. Overall, staff were warm, supportive, and enthusiastic about meeting children's care needs. As a result, children experienced positive care from staff who showed them they were loved and valued. One parent said, "Staff are very approachable, professional and friendly."

Regular team meetings supported staff reflection and improved practice, particularly around children's safety. Staff training in areas such as first aid, child protection and infection control helped to support children's wellbeing and enhance staff knowledge. However, there were gaps in staff skills that needed attention. Further development was needed in relation to supporting children's varying communication needs and responding to all children in developmentally appropriate ways. Also, there were skills and knowledge gaps in assessing, planning, and tracking children's learning and development. This meant some staff missed opportunities to challenge and support all children effectively. Ongoing training and guidance opportunities were needed to ensure further improvements in practice and skills across the staff team (see area for improvement 1).

Staffing ratios met requirements but deployment during transitions and key parts of the day was inconsistent. At times, staff numbers and deployment did not fully support children's varying needs. This reduced engagement and limited opportunities for children to feel nurtured and included at these times. For example, mealtimes in the baby room were not always calm or supportive as staff managed multiple tasks and differing needs. Ineffective deployment decisions, such as not seeking assistance or not planning tasks well, further impacted on the quality of care. The physical layout of some play spaces also posed challenges. Within the toddler age group, care was split across several rooms, leading to frequent movement between spaces, which at times disrupted children's play. The issues with staff deployment affected the continuity of experiences and did not always provide children with a sense of security. To improve outcomes, staffing arrangements and deployment planning needed to better reflect children's needs and the use of space. This is to ensure children's transitions are well-managed and interactions remain positive (see area for improvement 5 in 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection').

Areas for improvement

1. To promote consistently high-quality support for all children, the provider should enable staff to further develop their skills, knowledge and confidence in key areas of practice. This would include but not be limited to, developing skills, knowledge and confidence in relation to current child development theory and good practice in early learning and childcare.

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

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator: Children experience high quality spaces

Children experienced a warm, welcoming, well-equipped environment that reflected their needs. Comfortable furniture, cosy soft furnishings and age-appropriate resources supported children's safety, comfort and play needs. Displays and photographs within play spaces celebrated children's achievements. This helped make spaces child friendly. At times, some spaces did become disorganised and required attention to fully support children's engagement. To maintain these inviting environments, the provider should support staff to regularly reset spaces throughout the day. This is to ensure environments remain as inspiring and enabling as possible. However, overall, we found resources, materials and spaces were varied and catered to children's individual abilities, needs and interests.

Arrangements for the maintenance and repair of the building and equipment functioned well. Damaged items were removed and replaced. This practice enabled children to access good quality resources and materials. Ongoing maintenance was carried out, and the service had identified areas, which required attention. Systems were in place to address failures in equipment. For example, during the inspection a radiator was broken. The management team reported this quickly and appropriate action was taken. Despite the challenges of the building's layout and age, overall children experienced a well-maintained space.

Children experienced a clean environment, which promoted their wellbeing. Staff conducted effective infection, prevention and control practices. For example, staff and children engaged in effective handwashing at appropriate times. Regular cleaning of materials and surfaces helped limit the spread of infection. Facilities such as toilets and nappy changing areas had a good supply of personal protective equipment to support safe practices. Moving forward, the provider should continue to review the quality assurance processes in place to support prompt action to be taken. For example, quality assurance checks had identified some areas of the preschool dining room needed more cleaning but this had not been addressed. To ensure children experience consistently high-quality spaces ongoing monitoring and improvement should be made to ensure consistency in cleanliness and practice.

Children experienced a safe environment as doors and gates were secured by staff. An effective entry system ensured the building was secure and access was monitored. Children's safety was promoted because of the security measures in place.

Staff provided children with effective supervision, which supported their safety and wellbeing. Measures such as headcounts and clear communication between staff enabled them to keep track of where children were, limiting the risk of children being unaccounted for. However, busier times of the day should be monitored further to ensure there is enough staff present to manage spaces and children's varying needs (see area for improvement 5 in 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection').

Children play and learn 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

Children enjoyed a wide range of core play experiences that promoted curiosity, creativity, and sustained engagement. A range of materials and experiences, such as painting, water, sand, dough and outdoor play supported children's learning and play choices. These play experiences supported development in language, literacy, numeracy, and social skills. Babies explored sensory-rich resources that helped skills repetition and enabled them to have fun. Across the setting, open-ended materials and real-life items supported children's curiosity. Staff in all playrooms made time for stories, songs and rhymes throughout the day. This practice encouraged a joy of language and supported close connections with staff. As a result, children were engaged, had fun and learned new skills. One parent said, "There is a wide variety of activities on offer, and my child really benefits from this."

Responsive and caring interactions from staff supported children's wellbeing and play. Throughout the service, children had good opportunities to play and learn at their own pace, enabling them to explore and develop their play ideas. Effective questioning and narration by some staff extended children's thinking, communication, and language skills. Some staff narrated children's play, made gentle suggestions or wondered aloud as they engaged with children. This helped children to feel valued and encouraged learning. At times, staff scaffolded children's play, helping them to develop new skills and understanding. For example, staff played alongside children with the dough and children followed some of the movements and ideas. However, the provider should ensure consistency in the quality of interactions for play and learning, through enhanced quality assurance processes. For example, on some occasions, some staff were more directive in their interactions and focused on tasks rather than the learning opportunity. However, while some development was needed, overall, staff interactions were enthusiastic, warm and supportive, which showed children that they and their play mattered.

While children's play and learning benefited from some positive play experiences, engaging resources, and caring staff interactions, planning and assessment of children's learning and progress required improvement. Existing planning approaches were underdeveloped and lacked depth. Intentional planning focused on basic actions rather than linking to curriculum outcomes. For example, planned actions were basic, such as copying names or matching words, rather than planned experiences that would create enriched learning opportunities. Also, responsive planning techniques did not effectively build on children's interests. This meant staff missed opportunities to challenge and enrich children's learning. Observations of learning were infrequent, lacked detail, and next steps were not always followed up. As a result, the tracking of children's progress was inconsistent and not always effective. To ensure personalised, challenging learning and accurate monitoring and assessment, staff should be supported to develop and adopt child-centred planning and assessment approaches (see area for improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure personalised, challenging learning and accurate monitoring and assessment, staff should adopt child-centred planning and assessment approaches. This would include, but not be limited to:

- improving and implementing child-centred planning approaches,
- developing staff skills and confidence to effectively assess, support, and monitor children's progress over time.

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' (HSCS, 1.27).

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

Most children received warm, supportive interactions that helped them feel secure and valued. Staff often chatted with children, listened to their ideas, and offered comfort. Many staff showed children respect by explaining care tasks and asking for consent, supporting independence and positive relationships. Some parents described staff as kind, nurturing, and respectful. One parent shared, "My child feels secure and happy when I leave them, he happily runs off to play with his friends when I drop him off and always gets a big warm welcome from staff."

Mealtime experiences within the service varied in quality. While older children experienced positive mealtimes, younger children's experiences needed to improve. Within the toddler and preschool rooms mealtimes were calm and nurturing. Children ate at their own pace while staff sat with them and chatted. This created a relaxed, homely atmosphere. Within these age groups, children served their own food, poured drinks, and cleared plates, building independence and skills. Although children in the baby room were safe and supervised the experience was not always calm and nurturing. Disorganised staff deployment and the differing needs of young children made the experience noisy, with some children becoming unsettled. Staff needed more support to recognise children's cues and prioritise their needs during these times. Improved deployment and effective staffing arrangements were needed to ensure consistently positive mealtimes for children in the baby room (see area for improvement 5 in, 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection').

Overall, meals and snacks were balanced and healthy. Allergies and dietary requirements were well managed by staff, which helped to keep children safe. The service had recently changed the menus and meal timings following a review of good practice guidance. We encouraged the service to continue to evaluate the impact of these changes to ensure they have a consistently positive impact on children's experiences.

Staff used information provided within personal plans to support children's care and promote wellbeing. This was an improvement since the last inspection. For example, all children had 'all about me' documents, with important updates recorded over time. Most plans outlined how children's care should be provided and what things were important to them. This helped staff to follow and respect children's health and wellbeing needs. However, further work was needed to address some gaps in the information held and ensure consistent reviewing. While progress had been made, we have continued the area for improvement related to personal plans to address the gaps that remain in relation to personal planning approaches (see area for improvement 1 in 'What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection').

Overall, medication management was safe and organised. Information outlined children's needs and how staff should respond. Staff were knowledgeable about children's medical needs and allergies and spoke confidently about the actions they would need to take. This promoted children's safety.

Positive progress had been made in developing connections and communication with families. Parents were welcomed into the nursery each day and usually received a handover from staff about their child's day. Open days and 'stay and play' sessions gave parents greater opportunities to spend time in the play spaces. One parent said, "Open days and an open-door policy allows for me to be in contact with the nursery about my child's care at all times." While a few parents felt updates and communication could still improve, overall positive connections with families were established.

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 children's personal plans reflect their needs. This should include, but not be limited to, recording children's care and support needs and how these will be met in practice with effective support strategies.

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

This area for improvement was made on 4 October 2024.

Action taken since then

Personal planning approaches were developing, supporting some improved outcomes for children. Staff recorded important updates about children's health and wellbeing, which helped keep them safe and allowed staff to make changes to care when needed. However, some processes were inconsistent and did not reflect if plans were fully reviewed. This meant some plans did not follow best practice, which could lead to missed opportunities to give children the best care and support.

Some children's plans had support strategies, but these were sometimes too vague and did not give staff clear guidance on what care should look like. For example, plans sometimes said "continue to support" without explaining how. To support effective personal planning, staff should review the strategies within some plans to ensure they are meaningful, relevant and evaluated over time to assess impact. Personal planning approaches should be further developed to enable staff to consistently identify and plan for children who need extra support in a sensitive and effective way.

This area for improvement has not been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

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 young children's attachments and needs.

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

This area for improvement was made on 25 August 2023.

Action taken since then

Overall, staff provided nurturing care and support that promoted children's wellbeing. However, there were still some gaps in staff skills and knowledge. For example, staff needed more training on child development and attachment so they can provide consistently sensitive care. Children would also benefit from staff improving their confidence and skills in areas like planning for learning, supporting communication, and managing the youngest children's mealtimes. As a result of these gaps, this area for improvement was not fully met.

To aid ongoing improvements and reflect the current inspection findings, we have updated this area for improvement to include a wider range of practice needs, (see area for improvement 1 in Heading: Leadership).

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 (HSCS), which state: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

This area for improvement was made on 25 August 2023.

Action taken since then

Communication strategies had improved meaning parents and carers were more included in the life of the service and their children's experiences. They were invited to events like open days and 'stay and play' sessions, and newsletters kept them informed about aspects such as staffing changes. Staff also shared updates during daily drop-offs and pick-ups, which informed parents about their child's day. While some parents said communication could still be improved, most were happy with the communication strategies used and engagement from the staff and management that kept them informed about their child.

This area for improvement has been met.

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 (HSCS), which state: '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 25 August 2023.

Action taken since then

Quality assurance processes including self-evaluation and improvement planning had improved. This improvement led to better play opportunities for children, a more welcoming environment, and warm, supportive care. Although some gaps remained in the quality assurance processes, the service showed the capacity to implement processes and make improvements. Improvement planning reflected the needs of the service and the current staff team. While further work was needed to achieve a consistently high-quality service, overall, outcomes for children and families had improved as a result of more effective quality assurance processes.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

To promote consistently positive experiences for all children, the provider should support the management team to effectively review the deployment of staff responsively across the day and when forward planning. Staff should be available in appropriate numbers to meet the varying needs of all children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me'. (HSCS 1.19) and 'My needs are met by the right number of people. (HSCS 3.15)'.

This area for improvement was made on 25 August 2023.

Action taken since then

Further improvements were needed to ensure staff deployment promoted consistently positive outcomes for children. Busier times of the day like transition points and mealtimes in the baby room were not always as positive as possible. Staff deployment and the numbers of staff present did not always sensitively reflect the needs of children. As a result, children's care was adversely impacted during these periods. To secure consistently positive outcomes for all children, the provider should ensure staffing arrangements and deployment planning improve

This area for improvement has not 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

Leadership	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
Children experience high quality spaces	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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