

Wizkidz Nursery Day Care of Children

20-24 Station Road
Newtongrange
Dalkeith
EH22 4NB

Telephone: 01316 600 077

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
6 August 2024

Service provided by:
Wizkidz Nursery

Service provider number:
SP2003002991

Service no:
CS2003012100

About the service

Wizkidz Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 63 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. Of those 63 children no more than 12 are aged under 2 years.

The service used three playrooms each providing care for children of similar ages and stages. Two playrooms had direct access to secure outdoor area.

Wizkidz Nursery is situated off the main street in Newtongrange close to local shops and amenities. The service operates from three rooms within the building. There is an enclosed garden where children can experience outdoor play.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday, 30 July 2024 and Wednesday 31 July 2024. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children in each playroom
- took account of the written feedback we received from 17 families
- spoke to the provider, manager and senior staff
- spoke to all staff
- observed practice and daily routines
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy and secure in the care of staff who knew them well.
- Children were having fun and could play outdoors when they wanted to.
- The nursery was well led by a committed and supportive manager and leadership team.
- Further opportunities for training, which would broaden and support staff skills should be provided.
- Children were cared for staff who were dedicated and enthusiastic.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	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 support

Children were well supported by staff to be happy and settled within the service. They confidently interacted with staff and each other and were having fun. Staff approached children in a kind and gentle manner, using positive language to help them feel safe and secure. Some less experienced staff needed to further develop their skills and confidence. This would further strengthen relationships and confidence of children.

Personal plans were in place for children. These recorded information to keep children safe, and included medical needs or recognised support needs. They had been reviewed regularly with parents and updated to reflect where things had changed. Staff knew the children in their care well and were ensuring that support for routines such as toilet learning were in place. One parent told us "Personal plan is reviewed and updated on regular basis, but staff are also responsive to requests in between review of the plan (eg shortening nap time)".

Children were well supported in their transitions through the nursery. Staff used information documents, meetings between keyworkers and discussion with parents. Staff could describe the settling in process and ensured that change was taken at the child's pace to increase confidence and security.

Meals and snacks promoted healthy eating. Families had been involved in taster sessions whenever the menu changed. This allowed parents to try the home cooked meals their children were given. One parent told us "We have had input into meal plans".

Children experienced positive snack and lunchtime experiences which were relaxed, sociable and unhurried. Staff were aware of any dietary needs, which helped them to keep children safe. Children enjoyed finding a place to sit and chatted happily to their peers, which provided opportunities to promote close attachments and further develop language skills. They were supported to become independent and learn new skills during the making of snack and serving themselves during mealtimes. Management and staff agreed to review the mealtime experience for children in the junior room in order to promote further independence and the development of life skills. The youngest children were well supported by staff who encouraged them to be independent eaters. One parent told us when their child "was ready to stop using the highchair and was due to start using cutlery, we spoke to staff about this and they said they would encourage this".

Children had regular opportunities to plant, grow and harvest their own food in the nursery garden. Opportunities to grow food supported a sense of achievement, self-esteem and improves children's understanding of the natural environment.

All age groups of children had access to the outdoor space. Staff understood the significant benefits of outdoor play and how this impacted on children's health and wellbeing. Children could spend sustained periods of time outdoors if they wished. These outdoor opportunities were consistent throughout the nursery as children went on regular walks in the local community. One parent commented "My child is regularly out in either the garden or for local walks regardless of the weather".

Another commented "Both children play outside every day, either in the nursery's garden and via going for walks around the neighbourhood, going to the park, and to the train station to watch for trains". This meant children were learning about the world around them.

Quality indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Children were engaged in sustained play throughout the day,. They were confident to ask for additional resources and were responded to positively by staff. A group of children were interested in the solar system and another farm animals. Staff ensured that their play was supported by resources and discussions to allow the play to develop safely. As a result children were able to explore their interests and have fun together.

Children experimented with open-ended materials and loose parts, which were readily accessible and enabled children to explore their play in more depth and develop creativity and curiosity. This included, making potions outdoors with a variety of spices and ingredients. One parent told us "My daughter has had many wonderful learning through play and creative opportunities at Wizkidz. For example, she's contributed to an elaborate solar system display".

Overall, play in the youngest group was well supported, they benefitted from play experiences that reflected their interests and needs, along with the core provision of resources and experiences. Staff had knowledge of child development to enable them to provide play experiences for the young children. Further work could be carried out to develop the staff's understanding of schematic play in practice. This would help them to better support schemas, where children learn through repetition of actions or behaviours to find out how things work.

Literacy and numeracy was well considered for preschool children through daily opportunities to explore number, books and stories in the outdoor and indoor play environments. Children had access to a selection of different types of books including fiction, nonfiction and photo books. Children used the outdoor cosy den to tell each other stories or have them read by staff. There were opportunities for writing, counting, and making things which provided children with a good learning environment. For younger children there were good literacy opportunities and staff took time to read or sing with children. More literacy and numeracy opportunities could be provided outdoors for children to enhance the learning environment. Through planning for individual needs staff used the Up Up and Away document to promote achievement in language, literacy and learning. Sign a long was used throughout the nursery and we saw children and staff readily using signs to converse and strengthen bonds. Management and staff welcomed the support from the Midlothian Council Early Years Inclusion team. They worked together to promote strategies and support given to children.

Online learning journals were in use. From the selection we sampled we found observations were regular, meaningful and of a consistent standard across the nursery. The quality of observations had been identified by the manager and senior staff as an area for ongoing improvement. One parent told us "The learning journal is kept well up to date to allow me to see the learning of my child and allowing me to add anything I feel my child could be missing". This meant families were included in their child's development and well being.

There were planning approaches in place with intentional plans based on themes and seasons and responsive planning. In all rooms planning was clear where the observations of children were influencing the activities. One parent commented "At pick up times I have started to ask for more information about the particulars of my children's day and staff are accommodating". The ongoing development of quality assurance around planning highlighted any gaps.

The desired outcome was planning reflected individual needs and supported children to develop at a pace that was right for them. Children's ideas were included in planning and as a result children's voice was recorded and their right to play and learn valued.

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.

Children had access to accommodation which was comfortable and well furnished. Rooms were bright, well-ventilated and provided welcoming and well organised environments for children's care and learning.

Displays of information, children's artwork, environmental print, flowers and real-life images made the playrooms look interesting and homely. This sent a message to children that they mattered. One parent commented "Like a second home to my daughter - really nurturing environment where I know she is being taken care of and stimulated".

Playrooms and outdoor areas had been arranged and resourced to take account of children's ages and stages of development. Staff had reflected and reviewed the layout of playrooms, new flooring, storage and resources were provided. These all gave a welcoming feel to the service and had provided children with improved choice and independence. Playrooms for younger children provided opportunities for children to choose their own resources to support their interests and there was good use of real-life and open-ended resources. Environmental reviews were carried out to ensure different zones were suitably resourced. This could be further developed by involving children more in this process.

Staff were confident in their practice in promoting effective infection, prevention and control practice to ensure children's health and wellbeing. Hand hygiene routines were embedded and cleaning of areas before children ate were robust. It was clear staff took pride in creating and maintaining high quality spaces that met children's holistic needs. There were procedures for maintenance, repair and refurbishing areas of the nursery. Since our last visit improvements had been made throughout the nursery enhancing the environment for all children.

Measures were in place to ensure children played in a safe and secure environment. Procedures were in place for assessing risks, children were involved in this process where appropriate. Staff understood the benefits of enabling children to take calculated risks during their play. As a result, children were developing important life skills in meaningful ways.

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 management structure in the nursery was clearly defined and shared with staff and parents to ensure that everyone knew who was responsible for leading the service.

Staff, parents and children benefitted from an open and approachable leadership team. One parent told us "Staff are always happy to talk and this is true of the manager and assistant manager as well, who are always happy to talk in person or very quick to respond to email".

Managers had carried out observations of staff, modelling of good practice, team discussions and the sharing of the nursery vision, values and aims. This helped support staff to invest in the work they needed to do to achieve positive outcomes for children. The manager and senior staff could identify that there was work still to do, as staff were at different points of their professional development. There was a focus on staff wellbeing, which promoted a positive culture and the development of respectful relationships. This included, giving staff wellbeing packs and enjoying social activities.

Quality assurance and self-evaluation systems were in place. These processes had included gaining the opinions and views of parents, children and staff to help assess the quality of some areas of the service. An improvement plan detailed planned developments. This included, planning for children's individual needs. Management kept families up to date with current developments through newsletters and emails. This resulted in families being well informed.

Staff opportunities for meetings and discussions enabled them to share practice, discuss children's care and plan for play experiences. These meetings were supported by senior staff to ensure that everyone had an opportunity to share their views. The senior team met to discuss quality assurance, forward plans and changes. There were also opportunities for more informal discussions and staff confirmed that the managers door was always open if they needed to have an impromptu meeting. One staff told us "my needs are always recognised and supported".

To build on the positive relationships that staff and managers already had with parents, there were plans for a number of social opportunities for parents to spend time in the nursery. We have sign posted the manager to the Care Inspectorate document Me, my family and my childcare setting: A practice note for building stronger connections and meaningful relationships. This good practice guide could be shared with parents as they are welcomed into the building at the beginning and end of the day.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good. We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The deployment of staff was managed well and effective to meet children's individual needs. Staff worked well together and ensured children were able to follow their interests and access the full provision. One parent commented "All the staff are so friendly, really care about the kids and their wellbeing". Another parent commented "There are always plenty of staff members around the room and there have been occasions when I have had feedback from more than one person allowing me to fully hear what my child has been doing that day". This meant that children and families benefitted from strong partnerships that supported children to thrive and flourish.

There was a consistent and effective approach to communication. Regular team chats provided opportunities for staff to reflect on practice and ensure they were meeting the needs of every child. Staff worked effectively as a team as their commitment and understanding of quality engagement promoted children's learning and fun.

Staff sat with children and supported their learning and as a result, children experienced quality interactions that gave a strong message that they mattered.

Across the day, staff communicated very well as a team. They had a clear understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities and deployed themselves effectively to ensure children were supported. Staff breaks were managed without disruption to children's care and learning. This ensured staff's wellbeing was considered. As a result, children's sense of security and overall wellbeing was promoted.

Staff experience and skills varied across the nursery. Staff teams had been thoughtfully put together to ensure that staff strengths were utilised and less experienced staff were supported. Staff had opportunities to develop skills in mentoring colleagues. The induction process gave opportunities for staff to reflect at various stages and discuss their knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The management team used the 'national induction resource' (Scottish Government 2023) to promote a partnership approach between management and staff. As a result, staff were given sufficient time and support to understand what was expected of them. Staff told us they had received a good induction and had learnt a lot from their mentors. This contributed to children being cared for by staff who felt valued and supported.

A staff appraisal was carried out annually. This process identified strengths and areas staff may need to further develop. Staff said they found the appraisal process a supportive one. In addition there were observations of staff practice which were then used as a reflective practice tool for mentoring and discussion tool with individual staff. This was being used as support and supervision to develop practice and build confidence.

Children benefitted from a service that valued their right to play and have fun through quality interactions, positive relationships, and enabling environment.

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 positive outcomes and improve children's play experiences management and staff should provide children with more opportunities through free play, open ended materials and loose parts play, to promote their curiosity and imagination, their sense of wellbeing, wonder and adventure. Continue to review and evaluate the layout of children's play spaces both indoors and outside with full consideration being given to the experiences for children.

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

Action taken since then

Children's play spaces had been reflected upon and reviewed. Positive changes had been made in each of the playrooms. This included general maintenance, purchase of new storage and resources and changed layouts. Children were involved in the purchasing of new resources as they gave suggestions as to what they would like. Environmental reviews evidenced a reflective choice process. Open ended materials and loose parts play were being used more widely across the service with consideration given to children's experiences.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

Management should monitor staff practice to evaluate how training had influenced practice, understanding and positive outcomes for children. Staff should then reflect on their learning and embed it in their practice.

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

Action taken since then

Systems were in place for monitoring staff practice. Training records were kept and staff were encouraged to reflect on how training had influenced their practice. Details were kept in organised staff files.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

Management should complete staff appraisals. This would offer staff support to discuss their role in the service, highlight training needs and discuss goals.

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

Action taken since then

Appraisals had been completed and notes kept in individual staff files. Staff told us they found these useful for discussing their goals and achievements.

This area for improvement has been met.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

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

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