Hamiltonhill Family Learning Centre
Day Care of Children

115 Ellesmere Street
Glasgow
G22 5QT

Telephone: 01413 322 797

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

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8 June 2023

Service provided by:
Glasgow City Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
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About the service

Hamiltonhill Family Learning Centre is a Glasgow City Council childcare service which operates from a detached single storey building situated in the outskirts of Possilpark in north Glasgow. Children have access to five playrooms and a large outdoor play area. The outdoor area is divided into garden areas for children in each of the playrooms.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 89 children aged six weeks to those not yet attending primary school; of whom no more than 24 are under two years.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 June 2023 and 8 June 2023. 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:

- gathered the views of 19 families using the service
- consulted with 12 staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- The service was very well led by a strong, approachable manager who delegated responsibility appropriately to staff and involved them in the development of the service.
- Children's wellbeing was supported through excellent use of personal planning, taking account of the wellbeing indicators.
- Children were empowered to be fully involved in their play and learning through the skilled interactions and actions of staff.
- Children's learning and development was supported through a very well balanced curriculum.
- The range of rich opportunities for parental involvement in the service was sector leading.
- Children were confident in exploring and developing their outdoor environment, supported by staff who actively support and encourage children in their endeavours.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very 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? 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

Paying attention to everyone's emotional wellbeing was embedded in the service ethos and staff practice. Children were happy, settled and confident in the setting. They were familiar with the environment and routine and experienced warmth, kindness and respect from staff. There were nurturing relationships between children, staff and their peers throughout each playroom, based on respect. This helped children to feel cared for and safe. One Parent told us: "My child wants to go to nursery at the weekend and I think that is a sign that he feels safe and cared for there." Staff were skilled at building resilience and identifying when children were needing reassurance, love or comfort.

Personal planning reflected the holistic needs of each child to improve their wellbeing and support positive outcomes. Staff had worked closely with families to gather and share effective information on children's personal preferences. One parent told us: "I am fully involved in my child's care, including developing and reviewing their personal plan." We saw excellent 'All About Me' information recorded for individual children. This included information about children's routines, their favourite toys, likes and dislikes. This was used successfully by staff to support children's individual needs and promote consistency of care, play and learning. The Lead Practitioner in Attainment shared the data she had collated in relation to children's achievement in numeracy development. We could see opportunities to explore numeracy was across all areas of the playroom and this enhanced literacy and wellbeing skills throughout the nursery. Those children who required additional support, received that in a timely manner. We acknowledged that, when specialist support was needed, this was in place. The manager placed importance on working along with other professionals to support the whole family and shared with us some examples of this. Reviewing personal plans was a priority within the service and we agreed with this focus. In keeping with legal guidance, plans were in place for each child within 28 days of them joining the nursery to then be reviewed with families at least six monthly.

Children enjoyed a positive lunch experience which was sociable, relaxed and unhurried. Staff and children sat together laughing and chatting. Staff knew children's allergies for snacks and lunch. In the three to five room, the pre school children were experiencing lunchtime as they would at school. They used the trays, lined up and made choices of food and drinks. Staff told us that, through consultation with local primary one teachers, they felt this activity was a huge support to children moving to primary school as it allowed children to partake of an experience that was familiar to them when they start school, for the first time. Food provided by the service was nutritious and reflected current guidance, such as 'Food Matters', for children's well balanced diet. There were alternatives offered to meet any dietary needs of children and made sure everyone felt included. The day of our inspection visit was very hot and we noted that fresh water was easily accessible by children both indoors and outdoors to ensure they remained hydrated.

Staff recognised daily routines as a rich opportunity to promote close attachment. We saw sensitive arrangements around children's sleep routines. Staff worked in partnership with families to establish routines which responded to children's individual needs and family wishes.

For example, staff were aware of children's comforters and did not insist on rigidly following nap time; they were respectful of children's choices if they would rather play than sleep so that children were learning to recognise their own body's cues.

We reviewed the setting's medication policy and procedures. We found medication was stored securely and out of reach of children. Documentation was accurate and reflected children's individual health needs and requirements. Details included the type, strength and dosage of medication. We found families had regularly reviewed and signed off this information.

Staff had an understanding of child protection procedures and wellbeing as a result of training, that contributed to the safeguarding of children. Chronologies were in place and used for the purposes of monitoring and assessment, to help children with the right support at the right time.

Staff were respectful of parents' roles as key partners in their children's care and learning. Parents confirmed that staff regularly shared and exchanged information using online learning journals (Seesaw), closed Facebook pages, emails, telephone calls and chats during children's handover times. All parents who spoke to us, shared their personal experiences of the excellent support they had received from the service, which was offered to them on an individual basis to meet their needs. It was clear that staff had high aspirations to enable children to be successful. There were various opportunities for parents to come into the centre and have fun, play and learn with their child. Meaningful partnership working with families enabled staff to share strategies to support the holistic needs of each child and help them reach their full potential. A major strength of this service was the commitment from the whole staff team, to offer kindness and care throughout the local community. The carefully presented food bank at the front door, allowed parents dignity and respect, to take whatever they needed to ensure that their family had enough food to eat. Other examples of effective nurturing approaches included, occasional access for families to go to a holiday caravan, fundraising for charities locally to support the wider community and distribution of food vouchers. Currently there were free school uniforms for all children who were attached to the family centre, supporting parents to ensure all the children in the family had a school uniform, for the new term. Collectively these nurturing approaches ensured that families were supported to help close the poverty gap, they were currently experiencing.

1.3 Play and Learning

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

Children were meaningfully involved and made informed choices about their play and learning. One parent told us "My child has opportunities to be involved in meaningful, interesting and fun play experiences." They were leading their own play and learning through a balance of planned and spontaneous activities. They had choice and independence of where they wanted to play throughout the playrooms and how they would lead their play. A play based approach was firmly embedded within the service, this supported children who benefited from a wide range of experiences. This meant children were empowered to express their ideas and to develop problem-solving skills, awarding them a sense of achievement. It demonstrated that staff were valuing children's interests and supporting their play, learning and development through following children's line of enquiry at their own pace.

Planning approaches were child centred and responsive to children's interest and in line with current best practice guidance. Children were actively involved in planning and leading their own learning. Learning was tracked and extended, in line with best practice of how children learn. As a result, children were progressing well, and were happy and confident. One parent told us: "Children have fun as they experience high quality play, learning and development opportunities, which is shared with me through See Saw." We observed children engaged in play experiences for prolonged periods of time showing high levels of engagement, excitement, wonder and joy. For example, children spent a considerable amount of time choosing how many children, could play in the construction area. They spoke excitedly about how some children would choose the blocks to build and others would decide how high the structure would be.

Staff recognised the value of play as a concept in itself, as well as an opportunity for developing life skills and learning. Communication and language was a high priority for the service; from the baby rooms through to the preschool playroom. Staff understood that not all children learn at the same pace or in the same ways and they used different teaching strategies to support each child. Staff modelled very good language and gave children enough time to answer any questions. Effective use of questioning extends children's thinking, widens their skills, and consolidates their learning through play.

Younger children thrived from rich opportunities to be creative, curious and independent. Staff were skilled in offering experiences to these children in response to their wishes and interests. We saw that very good observations and discussion with parents ensured that children had fun whilst learning and developing. Older children were developing an interest in literacy and this was supported by opportunities to explore sound, environmental print and resources to write, paint and explore books. As much as possible, the room is set for children to be self sufficient in choosing and using resources. For example, paint, labelled boxes with pictures to help identify contents, open access to craft materials, junk modelling, small world experiences along with loose parts; indoors and out.

Outdoors, there were plenty of well considered open ended materials and creative approaches that successfully engaged children's imagination and enriched their play and learning. We observed children negotiating space and risk taking as they learned to use their body in different ways in the space available. For example, one group of children were building an obstacle course and effective questioning from staff helped children work out the risks involved in walking across their chosen path. Children's perspectives were listened to by staff and taken account of in staff observations and planning. Children's right to play was threaded through staff planning and the provision of children's play experiences.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

2.2 High Quality Facilities

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

The setting was well furnished, comfortable and homely. The setting's indoor and outdoor environments had developmentally appropriate spaces with equipment that was safe, secure and well-maintained. The building was well maintained and had good ventilation.

Children had a sense of ownership within the setting, they were able to select resources at ease, adapt spaces and make decisions on how resources could be used. The wide range of resources available to children allowed them to direct their own play and learning. On the day of inspection, all children were playing outdoors and we could see that safe sun practices were in place. The service was also making use of community amenities, such as the canal area, soft play, cyber tots and book bug. Opportunities to play and be active outdoors in different weathers and natural environments developed children's understanding of their wider world and benefitted their overall health and wellbeing. Staff had decided to take pop up tents along to the canal trips, as they encouraged parents to join them and this allowed them to keep dry. Parents told staff, that events had encouraged them to take the whole family on trips in the local community, that they previously did not know existed.

Play spaces both indoor and outdoor were developmentally appropriate. Children had access to a wide range of resources that supported and challenged their play and learning. Lots of loose parts, opportunities to be creative, access to sand water and physical play. Staff planned areas within each play space in response to children's interests. They were able to provide evidence of this through experiences that were on offer and floor books, trackers and photographs that recorded and evaluated learning that was area planned. We observed older children making use of quieter spaces to stop, think and relax indoors. In the outdoor space there was ample space to run, gain physical skills and learn road safety skills. One parent told us: "My child has a lot of opportunities to go outside to play and many different activities are outside. He was learning about syllables using water balls." Indoors there was a sensory room that staff had found particularly beneficial for children with additional support who needed to relax and self regulate.

Young children also enjoyed a very good range of heuristic and sensory play experiences, which supported how they communicated their thoughts and ideas to staff. For example, in their sectioned off area of the garden, there was a table at toddler height arranged as a mud kitchen where babies could participate in messy play that supported the development of fine motor skills. Risk assessments were in place for play spaces. On sampling these we found they detailed risk clearly and any mitigation and measures that were required, supported children's safety.

Staff completed daily registers. We saw staff communicating with each other to ensure they were accounting for all children. Registers were accurate and door wipe boards were used to show how many children were in and how many were outside.

We found good infection control measures were in place. Children and staff followed good hand hygiene procedures and tables and chairs were effectively cleaned before and after use at transition times.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

3.1 Quality Assurance and Improvement are led well

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

The manager promoted a clear vision that helped staff to develop meaningful aspirations for children and their families. Children and families benefitted from a culture of continuous improvement. Strong leadership supported staff to have high aspirations and confidence in their capacity to support children and families to reach their full potential. One parent told us: "The management in this facility are great and very welcoming. They always go above and beyond for the children and I am so grateful as a parent for all the support they have given me and my family." The manager ensured that high-quality learning through play is at the heart of improvement planning and inspired staff to build upon their own skills through, training, self evaluation and reflection. We saw evidence that staff reflected on the quality of the experiences offered to families, through the Care Inspectorate Quality Framework for day care of children, childminders and school age children document. There was strong evidence of what they were doing well and action points with timelines against those not as strong.

The manager had a comprehensive understanding of the importance of using the views of children and families, as well as partners, to inform planning and development of the service. One parent told us: "I am confident that the manager has the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to care for my child and support their learning." Parents told us that they were frequently asked questions in relation to developing a better service. There was regular parent evenings and these were very well attended. Responses on the effectiveness of a recent event was currently being collected. This was valued by parents. The manager ensured that those who could not attend had an opportunity to meet with staff at a time that suited them.

The manager created conditions where all people felt confident to initiate well-informed change and share responsibility for the process. Staff told us that the whole management team were accessible and happy to help in all aspects of the children's experience. Staff felt listened too and valued. They know that the manager tried hard to ensure staff get time to discuss and reflect the overall developments of the children's environment along with time to reflect on children's individual targets.

The management team and staff had created an effective improvement plan based on Glasgow City Council priorities for being a nurturing authority and closing the attainment gap. This was done along with what staff and management had identified as needing extended in Hamiltonhill Family Learning Centre.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

4.3 Staff Deployment

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

There were sufficient staff in place to ensure children were effectively supported throughout their session. Staff were deployed mostly in a way that meant there was a good mix of skills and experience across the setting. They communicated clearly with each other, and in a respectful manner, to create a positive ethos and to ensure that children's needs were met. This meant that children benefitted from positive experiences.

Continuity of care across the day was supported by effective staff deployment. Staff were organised to support regular outings. The management team had developed staff rotas which took account of busier times of the day such as mealtimes and transitions into and out of the setting. Staff told us that they do not go for breaks until children are settled and happy, this was also observed by inspectors. This meant that children received good levels of interactions throughout the day. One parent told us: "My child and I have received support in abundance from the management team and my ideas and thoughts are always listened to by keyworkers and management. This whole team understand the issues that impact on young families just now and go out of their way to fix them for us."

Procedures were in place to maximise staff attendance and staff told us they felt supported, respected, and valued. Staff told us that the full management team had a good understanding of staff's day to day work and frequently were in the playrooms, to celebrate staff successes or offer support and guidance.

The staff team worked very well together and were proactive in recognising where gaps may exist, and these were soon remedied. Suggestions like these are discussed at room and team meetings, ensuring that everyone has a voice. In the playrooms they communicated very well with their colleagues when a task may take them away from their responsibilities. Staff worked together to ensure effective supervision and quality engagement with the children across the day.

Arrangements for absence, whether planned or unplanned, are managed to support minimum disruption to children's routines. Children and families were prepared in advance for their key workers absence, wherever possible. If that was not possible there was always clear information on each playroom door, of which staff were in on that day. One parent told us: "The staff team are lovely. They all take their time to get to know all the children and it shows. Staff are friendly, supportive and knowledgeable and my child loves them."

Staff caring for children were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). They are the regulatory body responsible for registering the social services workforce. They provide public protection by promoting high standards of conduct and practice and support the professional development of those registered with them. It was clear that there were effective relationships between staff, parents and children.

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	6 - Excellent
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good

How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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