Cramond Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Cramond Crescent
Edinburgh
EH4 6PG

Telephone: 01313 126 450

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
1 May 2026

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002576

Service no:
CS2003015849

About the service

Cramond primary school nursery is registered to provide an early learning and childcare service to 50 children at any one time, aged between 3 years and primary school entry. The service is provided within Cramond primary school which is located in the North West of Edinburgh. It offers funded childcare to eligible children.

The nursery accommodation includes a large playroom, kitchen facilities and direct access to an outside play area. Toilet and nappy changing facilities are located at the back of the playroom. Children also benefit from access to an adjacent, enclosed nature area. This area was closed during inspection. They also have shared access to an early years playground with primary one.

The service is situated close to public transport routes, shops, and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 April 2026 between 09:15 and 16:30. We returned to complete the inspection on 28 April 2026 between 08:45 and 17:15. 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, 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
- reviewed feedback from an online survey from 12 families
- observed practice and daily routines
- spoke with staff and leaders
- reviewed documents relating to children's care, learning and development and the management of the service.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure that children are safe, the physical environment is well-maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

- Strong, values-led leadership was embedded across the service, with a shared vision clearly influencing daily practice. As a result, children experienced a nurturing, inclusive environment where they felt valued and were supported to thrive.
- A strong culture of self-evaluation and quality assurance ensured continuous improvement, leading to responsive practice and improved outcomes for children.
- Children experienced rich, meaningful, play-based learning, resulting in high levels of engagement, confidence and progress.
- Children were supported to revisit and talk about their play and learning, helping them to understand their progress, build confidence and make connections over time.
- Skilled interactions and responsive planning supported children to develop their thinking, creativity and independence through play.
- Children experienced warm, nurturing and inclusive care, supported by strong relationships and responsive interactions, resulting in high levels of emotional wellbeing and confidence.

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	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

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

Leadership 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

A strong, cohesive vision was driving decision-making within the service, with clear evidence of its influence across leaders, staff, children and families. Underpinned by the "Cramond Cares" ethos, this was embedded consistently across practice and shaped how challenges and improvement were approached. Practice was informed by robust and reflective evaluation, with learning used to identify and sustain improvement. This was evidenced in the service's response to a significant incident, where leaders adopted an immediate, reflective and values-led approach, resulting in strengthened systems, improved consistency in practice and increased confidence for staff and families. This demonstrated a clear culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

Children were treated as individuals, with their views consistently listened to and respected. For example, when children asked for their buildings not to be put away during tidy-up time, this was immediately honoured. Children were actively involved in discussions using the language of national wellbeing indicators (the SHANARRI Framework, Scottish Government, 2006), supporting shared values-based decision-making. During a discussion about sun safety, staff effectively prompted children by asking, "Can you remember what the UV is that tells us we need sun cream to stay safe?" This led to rich learning conversations, with children questioning weather conditions and risk, which supported critical thinking, confidence and mutual respect.

Children demonstrated they had internalised shared values. During minor disputes over resources, they were able to reframe situations, share and collaborate effectively with peers, without adult support. This showed the development of empathy, cooperation and positive social relationships.

The service's improvement vision, including the "Early Level Explorers" approach, was aspirational and focused on improving outcomes for children while strengthening staff practice. There was a clear emphasis on shared responsibility and collaborative improvement. Staff were confident in discussing practice, priorities and their roles, demonstrating a strong understanding of their contribution to children's development and wellbeing.

Self-evaluation for improvement was well-established and meaningful. Staff engaged regularly in reflective practice, using a range of evidence to inform improvement. Data was used to understand the diversity of the local community and to effectively identify strengths, gaps and priorities. For example, analysis identified the need to strengthen early mark-making, leading to planned collaboration across early level staff to share expertise and improve attainment. As a result, children experienced learning that was responsive, relevant and well-targeted.

Partnership working with families was a key strength and enhanced children's experiences. Families described the nursery as a, "warm and encouraging environment" with children who were "always excited to attend and always happy at pickup." They also reported being regularly consulted and involved through shared activities and cultural experiences, strengthening relationships and continuity.

One parent noted that, "communication is outstanding. They truly go above and beyond with this." The service was signposted to 'Me, my family and my childcare setting (Care Inspectorate, 2024)' to support further reflection.

There was a strong culture of professional trust and support. Staff took ownership of improvement priorities and described how their work contributed to positive outcomes. Inclusive approaches, such as the development of signs to support individual needs had wider benefits for communication across the service. Staff felt well-supported through professional dialogue and clear leadership, enabling confident contributions to inclusive practice.

Quality assurance processes were systematic and effective, supported by a well-organised annual calendar. Where areas for development were identified, such as variability in learning journals and clarity of next steps, these were already recognised and prioritised by leaders, demonstrating proactive self-evaluation. Continued focus will support more precise assessment and clearer progression for individual children.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Children play and learn

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children experienced a highly engaging, play-based learning environment where learning was purposeful, inclusive and responsive to their interests and developmental needs. One family told us their child, "Likes being able to play outside whenever they like, playing with water and recently bird watching. They have also enjoyed taking part in learning such as number work, exploring sounds, mark making and creating self-portraits. They come home every day excited to tell me what they have done."

Spaces were inviting, sensory-rich and well-organised, supporting curiosity and sustained engagement. Children were absorbed in play for extended periods, supported by well-planned experiences and skilled adult interactions. For example, children's imaginative play led to the creation of a lemonade stand, which developed in complexity over time. Natural materials, such as lemons, mint and flower petals were incorporated as ideas evolved into "strawberry" and "chocolate" lemonade. Children negotiated roles, introduced pricing, created coins and solved problems related to turn-taking and resources. Staff supported this effectively by allowing ideas to develop and intervening sensitively to extend thinking. Children also took responsibility for maintaining the area, demonstrating pride and ownership while supporting their physical development. As a result, a wide range of skills were developed in a meaningful context, including emergent numeracy, social interaction and problem-solving, while others engaged in rich sensory exploration.

Although outdoor space for larger-scale gross motor experiences was more limited, plans were in place to mitigate this through use of the shared 'early level' playground and planned physical activity, ensuring children's physical development continued to be supported.

Children were highly engaged in discussion and shared thinking, supported by skilled interactions. During story-based experiences, staff used open-ended questioning and followed children's ideas, supporting vocabulary, curiosity and understanding.

Children with additional support needs were included effectively. For example, one child engaged in movement and coordination activities with modelling and encouragement, building confidence and perseverance, while another developed early cause-and-effect thinking through programmable play. As a result, children accessed learning in ways that met their individual needs.

Practitioners consistently worked at children's level and demonstrated a clear understanding of when to intervene and when to step back. Interactions were warm, responsive and purposeful, supporting communication, thinking and sustained engagement.

Planning was child-centred, responsive and authentic. For example, after finding a frog outside, this led to exploration of life cycles and the development of the 'frog club.' One family highlighted further experiences: "Painting, playing in the water, cycling, learning about science, nature, scavenger hunts, community walks, visits to the beach."

Children were supported to reflect on and consolidate their learning in meaningful ways. They regularly used learning journals to recall experiences, make connections and take pride in their achievements. Approaches such as visual progression in mark-making enabled children to recognise their progress and consider their own next steps. As a result, children developed confidence, independence and increasing awareness of their learning.

Improvements in the assessment of children's learning were underway, including the development of shared expectations for observations. Links between learning journals, floor books and tracking supported an overview of progress. Staff demonstrated strong knowledge of children's development and used this to provide appropriate challenge. Some inconsistencies remained, particularly where observations described experiences without clearly identifying learning or progress. Where practice was strongest, observations were evaluative and informed meaningful next steps. Strengthening consistency, particularly in aligning next steps to children's development, would further enhance outcomes. Leaders had appropriately identified this as an area for ongoing improvement.

Families highly recognised the impact on their children's play and learning. One noted, "My child has really developed confidence," while another shared, "I know clearly what my child has been doing and can pick up their learning from home with their next steps. Their numeracy and literacy skills have come on so well."

Children are supported to achieve — 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children experienced a warm, nurturing and inclusive environment where relationships between staff and children were a clear strength. Staff knew children well and responded sensitively to their needs, helping them feel safe, secure and confident. Interactions were consistently warm, respectful and responsive, promoting strong emotional wellbeing.

One family told us, "My child enjoys going to Cramond nursery because it is a warm and encouraging environment." Staff were described as, "compassionate, knowledgeable, friendly, confident and consistent" while another said, "The staff in the nursery are really outstanding, they go to lots of effort to make the children feel comfortable and happy. They teach them about the world. They work so well together as a team and are really one of the strengths of Cramond primary school."

There was a strong culture of inclusive, child-centred care. For example, where disagreements arose, staff responded promptly and calmly, supporting children to manage their emotions before re-engaging in play through reassurance and choice. This approach supported children to understand and manage their feelings. Children with additional support needs were supported effectively through individualised strategies and well-planned approaches. For example, through structured routines and tailored communication strategies. These supported children to be able to engage in play and learning, as well as supporting their independence and full participation in nursery.

Children's dignity and wellbeing were prioritised. Staff interactions were respectful, and children were encouraged to express their views and make choices within daily routines. During snack experiences, children were supported to make choices and engage meaningfully with others. Approaches, such as 'tiny tastes' encouraged exploration of new foods in a positive, social way, promoting curiosity and shared experiences. Lunchtimes were calm and sociable, with staff sitting alongside children to support interaction and engagement. While the current organisation supported routine and consistency, there was scope to further develop children's independence and participation, for example through greater involvement in preparing, serving and clearing away food.

There were a number of transitions and group experiences throughout the day. These provided opportunities for meaningful learning, including the use of wellbeing indicators to support children to talk about their feelings, relationships and achievements. These approaches were effective in developing children's understanding. However, similarly high-quality interactions were observed during play and daily experiences when children chose to engage. At times, the frequency and structure of transitions reduced opportunities for sustained, self-directed play. Ongoing reflection on the timing, group size and frequency of these experiences could support greater flexibility and further enhance children's choice, engagement and wellbeing in line with the service's child-centred approach.

Partnerships with families was a notable strength. Communication was strong and consistent, with families reporting that they felt well-informed, supported and able to contribute to their child's learning and wellbeing. Families described the service as "warm and encouraging" and highlighted strong relationships with staff, supporting continuity between home and the setting.

Personal planning was generally effective in supporting children's wellbeing and individual needs. Plans were strengths-based and informed responsive care in practice, with clear evidence of multi-agency involvement where appropriate. There were some inconsistencies in the completeness of plans, for example where next steps or the impact of events were not always recorded. While this had not negatively impacted children due to strong team communication and awareness of children as individuals, improving consistency would further support continuity of care as children's circumstances change.

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

The provider should review and strengthen the risk assessment processes to ensure they are current, comprehensive and fully reflective of the environment and the needs of the children attending. Risk assessments must clearly identify potential hazards and set out explicit strategies to manage risk, including staff deployment, supervision arrangements, the management of children who may present increased risk and any risks identified from play and stay sessions. To support this, consideration should be given to staff positioning, responsibilities and expectations when supervising children outdoors. As well as the importance for monitoring key risk areas and ensuring staff remain consistently aware of group dynamics and the individual needs of children, particularly those with an identified support needs.

This area for improvement was made on 14 November 2025.

Action taken since then

The provider demonstrated a strong, values-led response to the identified area for improvement, by focusing on learning and system improvement.

Immediate action was taken to reduce risk, including the introduction of additional safety barriers and temporary adjustments to the outdoor environment, while more robust risk assessments were undertaken. These revised assessments are now more comprehensive and reflective of the environment and children's individual needs, including those requiring additional support at transition times.

The use of SIMOA guidance (Care Inspectorate, 2021) supported effective team reflection and led to clearer, more consistent procedures, particularly in relation to staff deployment, supervision and end-of-day routines and around times of transition. Expectations are now explicit, supporting a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities, with defined positioning at key points such as gates, doors and indoor areas.

Practical improvements to staff deployment and ongoing practices, such as regular headcounts and clear communication of children's movements, have strengthened oversight during higher-risk periods. Changes to the environment and supervision arrangements have enhanced visibility and monitoring of key risk areas, while maintaining appropriate awareness of group dynamics and individual safety needs. The staff team also reinforced safety messages with children in a meaningful way, supporting their developing awareness of risk.

Open, transparent and inclusive communication with families helped to maintain trust and confidence.

Overall, these actions have strengthened risk assessment processes, improved consistency in practice and reduced risk. Ongoing monitoring will be important to ensure these improvements remain embedded and proportionate over time, maintaining children's safety, while continuing to support meaningful play and learning opportunities.

This area for improvement has been met.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good

Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good

Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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