# Croftmalloch Primary School Nursery
# Day Care of Children

Raeburn Crescent
Whitburn
Bathgate
EH47 8HQ

Telephone: 01501 740 506

**Type of inspection:**
Unannounced

**Completed on:**
22 February 2024

**Service provided by:**
West Lothian Council

**Service provider number:**
SP2003002601

**Service no:**
CS2003016151

## About the service

Croftmalloch Primary School Nursery can provide an early learning and childcare service to a maximum of 40 children at any one time, aged from two years to primary school entry, of whom no more than 10 are under three years.

Situated within the school, the service comprises of one large playroom with toilets and a kitchen area. The service also makes use of the school gym hall and a small room for individual or small group support. A secure garden area is accessed from the playroom. In addition, children have regular visits to a small forest area within the school grounds for outdoor learning.

The service is close to local transport routes and street parking is available.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 20 February 2024 between the hours of 09:10 and 16:00. We returned to complete the inspection on Thursday 22 February 2024 between the hours of 08:45 and 15:40. 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 the last inspection report, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:
- received 26 responses from parents to our electronic request for feedback
- received seven responses from staff to our electronic request for feedback
- spoke with and interacted with children
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents relating to children's care and learning and the management of the service.

We provided in-person feedback to the service on Thursday 22 February 2024. In attendance were members of the management team and a representative from West Lothian Council.

## Key messages

Genuine warmth and connection underpinned practice which resulted in happy, nurtured and confident children.

A wide range of opportunities were available to stimulate, intrigue and bring joy to children's play and learning.

A well supported team were effectively enabled to make considered improvements which were enhancing outcomes for children.

Children were cared for in a safe environment which constantly adapted to their changing needs and interests.

## 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 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.

**Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support**

Children were extremely nurtured and supported throughout their daily experience by high quality interactions and responsive routines. Real expressions of kindness, love and respect between all in the nursery provided a safe and compassionate place for children to be. This resulted in children feeling and expressing love and affection to those around them.

Children were familiar with the flow of the day and engaged enthusiastically in it. Transitions between events were gentle with song signifiers used to aid children's understanding. For example, a gradual approach to resetting the room did not disturb play but did make children aware of when the day was about to change. Personal care was discreet and respectful and sleep times were responsive to individual children. Each child's needs and preferences were valued and used to plan their daily care. This meant that children were consistently having their needs and wishes met, resulting in enhanced wellbeing. Mealtimes were safe and calm experiences allowing children to eat at their own pace. Staff's enabling approach empowered children to make choices about what and when to eat. Opportunities to prepare, serve and clear away their own food provided new life skills and a sense of achievement. For example, independently pouring, spreading and washing their own dishes.

Children's individual wellbeing benefitted from the effective use of personal planning. Working in partnership with a range of agencies gave children the support they needed to reach their full potential. For example, physiotherapists and speech and language. Staff knew children very well and had very good insight into their family lives. This allowed them to work closely with parents to ensure children's care and support was relevant and consistent. Children's progress was monitored closely to ensure the support strategies continued to be effective.

Medication was managed and administered according to best practice. Staff were knowledgeable about children's health and medication needs, as well as how to best consistently support them. This resulted in children being safe and well.

**Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning**

Children had fun as they experienced high quality play, learning and development opportunities. They moved freely around the spaces, making choices, negotiating in play and experimenting with resources. They had space and time to immerse themselves in experiences and take forward their ideas. The skilled interactions of staff extended children's thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills. For example, supporting children to consider how to realise their ideas at the woodwork bench. Daily tasks and routines were used as opportunities for learning and practising of skills. For example, dressing to go outdoors or returning resources to their places. Children were equal partners in the routines and practical tasks of the service and so were developing a sense of responsibility. Real life opportunities extended into play spaces with real fruit to chop and making dough each day.

Literacy and numeracy opportunities were present in each play space which meant children incorporated

them into play. They could confidently talk about new words they had learned and what they meant. In addition, staff moved seamlessly around children and used opportunities for literacy or numeracy activities in relation to interests at that time. For example, modelling letter formation, songs and group games and name recognition.

Connections within the local community offered a variety of intergenerational experiences for children. For example, relationships had been formed with a local supported living accommodation for older adults. Regular visits took place where they shared stories, songs and gardening advice. Within the school community, children regularly visited the gym hall and dining room to begin building links. The availability of the small breakout room meant children could make use of quieter areas where needed, which had a positive impact on their wellbeing and play.

Children's experiences and interests were reflected in the child-centred planning processes. Interests were recognised and incorporated into different play areas to facilitate children's discovery and exploration. Children's learning was tracked effectively, allowing planned interventions where needed to aid progress. The service will continue to work on tracking the impact of parental engagement as part of children's individual progress.

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

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

**Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience quality facilities**

The setting was well-furnished, comfortable and homely which provided a welcoming environment for children. Their voice, photographs and artwork were attractively displayed in light and well-ventilated areas. Children had spaces to store their things and could easily access these at anytime. All of this gave children a sense of belonging and comfort.

The setting was secure and well-maintained, which meant that children were safe and valued. Staff were discreetly vigilant and worked with the children to consider risk and safety measures. This empowered children to independently assess and manage risk through making decisions and problem-solving. For example, when considering their own and others safety at the woodwork benches.

Infection prevention and control measures were in place. This reduced the risk of infection spread, keeping children healthy. Children were familiar with these and willingly engaged with tasks such as handwashing.

The indoor and outdoor environments were developmentally appropriate spaces, offering children stimulating places to play. A range of age and stage appropriate resources were available for children to access, resulting in an industrious space. A wide range of real and natural items were in use around the setting, providing intrigue and creativity for children. For example, bottle tops were being used in woodwork and a sieve was used as a trap.

Outdoors was spacious and offered different terrains for children to navigate. Recent developments had enhanced opportunities for planting, growing and woodwork which children were happy to talk about.

One child told us about strawberries they had grown and eaten. A forest area within school grounds was being used to offer play in natural surroundings. The service were keen to continue the development of this, further extending learning to the outdoors. We referred staff to the best practice document, 'Out to Play: creating outdoor play experiences for children' (Scottish Government 2020).

Spaces throughout the setting reflected children's interests as staff listened, observed and responded. For example, a café had evolved from children's play. The service should continue to offer children inviting and intriguing place to play by considering how resources are set out and displayed.

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

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

**Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are well led**

A shared vision, values and aims positively informed practice. Children's rights, compassion and inclusion underpinned daily life and were consistently modelled by staff. Work was underway to refresh the vision, values and aims with the whole community. Staff, parents and children were happy which was reflective of a strong vision creating a happy ethos.

Families were meaningfully involved and able to influence change within the setting. A range of opportunities were developing for parents to be in the service and offer suggestions for improvements. For example, stay and play sessions, questionnaires and coffee mornings. Parents were listened to and their feedback was used to improve or create change. Staff were insightful to the lives and challenges of the parent group and were being creative to make them feel welcome in the service.

Quality assurance including self-evaluation and improvement plans were in place and were leading to continuous improvement. The improvement plan was informed through self-evaluation with everyone involved. This resulted in a working document which all played a part in. Staff got strong messages of confidence in their capacity from management, which impacted positively on their motivation and commitment.

The team were open to improvement and had identified future priorities to work on. Regular self-evaluation allowed benchmarking against best practice documents. Audit tools were also used to assess current practice. These then informed planning and resulted in positive outcomes for children.

Overall improvement planning was effective in enhancing outcomes for children, with a commitment to high expectations from all. Staff were enabled and empowered to meet those expectations through practice reflections, training and ongoing support.

## How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

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

**Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment**

Deployment and levels of staff were effective in ensuring high quality outcomes for children. They were cared for by mostly long-standing and consistent staff. This offered familiarity and continuity for families as relationships had been built and sustained. There were enough staff to meet the safety and welfare needs of children. Additional staff had been recruited to bring a more inclusive and enabling approach to all children in attendance. This also allowed effective contingency planning for staff absences as children and staff were familiar with each other.

Staff made use of their range of skills, experiences and interests through their leadership roles. For example, staff took responsibility for leading on areas of provision such as literacy or outdoor learning. Staff were skilled and motivated to continue their development through training and professional reading, which was then be shared with their colleagues. This led to comprehensive improvements. An example of this was the developments taking place to enhance children's outdoor learning.

Staff were flexible and supported each other to work as a team to benefit children. They shared appropriate information about children to keep all informed and ensure continuity of care. They communicated with each other effectively as they moved around the setting. This meant all areas of the nursery were proactively covered so staff were always available to support and nurture 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 | 5 - Very Good |
| 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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