Mid Calder Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Mid Calder
Livingston
EH53 0RR

Telephone: 01506 882 092

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 January 2025

Service provided by:
West Lothian Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
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About the service

Mid Calder Primary School Nursery is a day care of children service registered to provide care to a maximum of 66 children from the age of two to not yet attending primary school.

The nursery is located within Mid Calder Primary School in Mid Calder, Livingston. The nursery premises consists of an entrance hall, cloakroom, toilet facilities, a large playroom and a smaller playroom which is also used for mealtimes. Children have direct access to the nursery garden and make use of green spaces such as woodland within the local community. The nursery is close to local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 January 2025 between 09:15 and 16:30 and 21 January 2025 between 08:00 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
- received feedback from 22 families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

· Staff and leaders had high aspirations and a shared vision for all children to achieve their potential.

· Children experienced kind, caring and positive interactions from staff which created a welcoming and nurturing ethos.

· Children had opportunities for spontaneous and planned experiences and were actively involved in leading their own play and learning.

· Observations of children's development and learning were infrequent and did not always demonstrate children's significant learning.

· A culture of self-evaluation for improvement had been created and supported staff to reflect on practice. Quality assurance processes were in place however, identified improvements were not always impacting on children's outcomes.

· Strong team work and effective communication contributed to a caring environment for children.

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?	4 - 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: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced kind, caring and positive interactions from staff which created a welcoming and nurturing ethos. They had built positive attachments with staff and sought out support from them. They were offered cuddles and reassurance with warmth and affection which helped them to feel safe and secure. Children's personal care needs were met with dignity and respect. For example, children were sensitively asked if their nappy could be changed. All families agreed and strongly agreed that they were happy with the care and support their child received in the service. Most families told us they had a strong connection with the staff caring for their child. Their comments included staff were "friendly", "caring", "approachable" and "welcoming".

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through effective use of personal planning. Staff knew children well and were responsive to their individual needs. A key strength of the setting was the proactive and positive relationships developed with other professionals to ensure each child's needs were supported. Staff worked in collaboration with other professionals to identify strategies of support tailored to children's individual needs. They effectively used these strategies which meant children experienced care and support which was right for them.

Children's independence was encouraged through opportunities to self-serve during mealtimes. This helped to build their confidence and life skills. Snack was a calm and relaxed experience. Children were able to choose when to eat their snack which promoted choice. Staff should consider ways to enable children to eat lunch at a time that is right for them. Children experienced a positive, sociable lunch as staff sat with them and chatted. Where children needed support, this was offered in an encouraging, and respectful way, enabling them to develop skills such as using cutlery. Children would benefit from staff eating with them to promote and role model good eating habits.

Medication was safely stored which helped to keep children safe. Medication was audited however, these processes were not fully effective. On one occasion, the action identified had not been followed up and as a result we found medication which was out of date and no longer required. This meant that children's medical needs may not always be safely met.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had opportunities for spontaneous and planned experiences and were actively involved in leading their own play and learning. For example, children had exciting and fun opportunities to explore and take part in risky and adventurous play in the woods. This promoted curiosity, enquiry and problem solving and provided children with opportunities to push their own boundaries and build self-confidence. Families were positive about the outdoor play and learning experiences their children had. Their comments included, "I love that my (child) has the choice to go outside regardless of the weather" and "My child very much enjoys the 'Wild Connections' sessions where they have the opportunity to go outdoors and explore".

Most staff used effective questioning and commentary to support children's learning. Children enjoyed mark making and reading stories with staff which supported their development in language and literacy. Opportunities for numeracy and mathematics such as comparing size and counting were included in children's play and learning experiences. Some children would benefit from further challenge to extend their learning. There were a few missed opportunities to provide high quality interactions for younger children and as a result, at times, they were not engaged in play and wandered around the setting.

Staff were responsive to children's interests during play and used these to plan experiences. Children had good opportunities to record their play and learning in floor books. Their voice was evident as they contributed to floor books with comments and drawings about their experiences. Play and learning experiences were evaluated which highlighted children's learning.

Staff were knowledgeable about children's individual development. Observations of children's development and learning were recorded and shared with families through an online platform. These were infrequent and many families told us they would like more information about their child's progress and development. Observations did not always demonstrate children's significant learning and next steps were broad and not measurable. This meant that children's achievements and development may not always be recognised **(see area for improvement 1)**.

Areas for improvement

1. To help all children to reach their potential, the service should ensure that an effective cycle of high-quality observations supports and meets individual learning and development needs. This should include but is not limited to:

a) identifying significant learning
b) identifying measurable and achievable next steps
c) following up on next steps to celebrate children's progress and achievements.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27).

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 experienced a bright, well-furnished and welcoming environment. Children's artwork was attractively displayed in the cloakroom which created a sense of belonging. There were some homely, comfortable and cosy spaces for children throughout the setting which provided opportunities for them to relax and retreat to.

Children had choice and independence about their play indoors and moved freely and confidently between areas. They had direct access to the garden and benefitted from free flow opportunities between the indoors and outdoors. Children had ample space and were enabled to direct their own play and learning as resources were easily accessible and developmentally appropriate. Most areas of the setting were well used, for example, children enjoyed creating, experimenting and problem solving in the block play area. Children would benefit from additional real life resources in some areas to enhance their play and learning experiences.

The setting was safe and well maintained and consideration had been given to ensure the environment was secure. Children were involved in discussions about how to keep themselves and others safe. They had opportunities to be involved in assessing and managing risks as they explored the woods and enjoyed climbing trees.

Children were well supported to wash their hands before mealtimes which helped to keep them safe and healthy. The leadership team had identified through monitoring that children would benefit from being reminded to wash their hands after playing outside.

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

Staff and leaders demonstrated a commitment and passion to make positive changes for children and families. They had high aspirations and a shared vision for all children to achieve their potential. Staff and leaders were reflective and realistic about their improvement journey. They were responsive to suggestions made during the inspection to continue to improve outcomes for children and families.

Families had some opportunities to be included in the setting. For example, they had been involved in reviewing the vision, values and aims of the setting and were invited to stay and play sessions. Some families told us they did not feel they had meaningful ways to develop the service. There was scope to build on this to actively seek families' views and enable them to influence change.

Quality assurance processes had been developed and were supporting staff and leaders to identify improvements. Actions were identified in audits and monitoring however, they were not consistently followed up. As a result, identified improvements were not always impacting on children's outcomes.

A culture of self-evaluation for improvement had been created and supported staff to reflect on practice, identifying strengths and areas for development. Self evaluation processes could now be enhanced by further involving children and families. The improvement plan reflected the current priorities in the setting and supported the development of key areas of practice. Good progress was being made towards meeting the priorities, for example, in supporting children's emotional wellbeing through interventions.

How good is our staff team? 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 4.3: Staff deployment

The strong team working ethos and effective communication contributed to a caring environment for children. Staff were confident to ask each other for help to enable them to support children. The mix of staff knowledge and skills across the setting had been well considered. This meant that children experienced good quality care, play and learning experiences.

Staff were mostly well deployed, for example, they had fully considered the deployment of staff in the woods to keep children safe. At times, staff were providing support to individual children. They worked hard to meet all children's needs however, despite their best efforts, they were not consistently able to fully support all children. The leadership team had identified this and had taken appropriate action.

Families told us they felt there were always enough staff in the service to meet their child's needs. Some families were positive about the information and communication they received. However, other families told us they did not feel they were given good quality information when collecting their child. This meant that not all families felt well informed about their child's day.

Staff breaks were well planned around children's needs including busier times such as mealtimes. Effective arrangements were in place in the event of staff absence, with staff members from other settings supporting children. Relevant records had been developed to enable new and unfamiliar staff quickly learn about individual children's specific needs and how to effectively support them.

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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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