Deans Primary School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Deans South
Deans
Livingston
EH54 8DB

Telephone: 01506 411 208

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 December 2024

Service provided by:
West Lothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002601

Service no:
CS2003016167

About the service

Deans Primary School Nursery Class is part of West Lothian Council's provision for early learning and childcare and is based within Deans Primary School, located in Livingston. The service is registered to provide nursery facilities for up to 58 children at any one time aged from 2 years to not yet attending primary school. The Service currently provides full day placements from 08:00 until 15:30 during term time.

The nursery accommodation included an entrance hall/cloakroom area, one large play room, with integral kitchen, toilets and a nursery base office. There was a fully enclosed area for outdoor play and learning.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 11 December 2024 from 08:45 until 15:15 and Wednesday 12 December 2024 from 08:45 until 13:30. 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 three parents
- spoke with staff and management
- reviewed three parent feedback
- reviewed staff feedback
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke to children.

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing, warm and kind interactions from staff.
- Children had access to indoors and outdoors throughout the day, enabling them to make choices in their play.
- Children benefitted from the approaches to parental engagement, enabling them to share special moments with their families.
- Children were engaged in their play and interested in the experiences available to them.
- Children were happy, settled and confident in the setting.

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 very good, where major strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children with very few areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, nurturing and respectful interactions. Staff offered children close affection in the form of cuddles, and expressed genuine care. Staff offered reassurance to children, which meant attachments and relationships were strong. As a result, children felt safe and secure in the service.

Children were supported through the effective use of personal plans. Strategies of support were developed in consultation with parents, this enabled a consistent approach to supporting children. Strategies were individualised and implemented in response to the child's needs. For example, a child was being supported with toileting. The approaches were clear to carry out and any changes made were in response to the child's progress. As a result plans were reflective of children's needs, and updated regularly and reviewed in line with current guidance.

Strategies and goals for children with additional support needs had been identified through meetings with professionals and families. This positive collaborative working meant that staff were supported to offer better outcomes for children. For example, staff were aware of creating opportunities for one to one time for some children and planned for this as part of their daily routines.

Children experienced familiar routines at mealtimes, this enabled children to develop their independence and participate in every day activities. Children collected their own crockery, chose who they sat beside and cleared up once they were finished. Staff were present at each table, providing support, guidance and engaged in conversations with children. As a result, mealtimes were unhurried, and children had the opportunity to develop life skills through this daily experience. One child was asked to show a newer child the mealtime routine, which they did with confidence, explaining the routine. This meant that children could demonstrate their understanding of the routines and give support and reassurance to newer children.

A variety of formal and informal parental engagement opportunities were available across the service. A parent has taken responsibility for managing the big bedtime read lending library and attended the service weekly to support this. They explained that they enjoyed being part of the school community and have got to know the children well through this role. Parents have attended Forest kindergarten, PEEP and stay and play sessions. The service have been creative in adopting an approach to share the Care Inspectorate's safety campaign of SIMOA, to keep children safe. Children take SIMOA the elephant home to spend time with them and their families. There was supporting information in the pack for home around safety, and the image of SIMOA the elephant and the campaign poster being the same supported children and parents to recognise campaign. This contributed to strengthened relationships, and created strong links between children's home life and nursery.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Planning approaches were child led, following their interests and supported by seasonal changes. Learning intentions were planned for across the curriculum. For example, a group of children were monitoring the cause and effect of the cold weather turning water into ice. Children were supported to compare the effects of ice indoors with skilful questions from staff. Children's voices were then captured within consultative plans, capturing their learning and new interests.

Planning sheets were displayed across a large section of the wall that was accessible for children and staff to write on. This enabled plans to be interactive, responsive and part of the day to day experiences for children. The planning cycle was clear and understood by staff who were able to talk through how plans were influenced, and learning captured as part of learning journals. For example, a child was able to explain a pattern they had created using coloured blocks. The learning was extended by providing additional blocks to create larger pattern sequences for the child to explore. Children's experiences and next steps were recorded on the digital platform, Seasaw. As part of self evaluation approaches leaders were in the process of exploring how to enhance children's next steps further to maximise their potential learning.

The service had worked hard to develop the daily core provision as the foundations of children's play and learning experiences, including creative areas, sand, water play dough and home area. Literacy, numeracy were available in areas across the setting. Literacy opportunities were supported through interactive displays, books, mark making and signs. Children had opportunities to measure, explore pattern, look at environmental print and experiment that supported their numeracy. Interactions between children and staff provided additional opportunities for these to be developed through play. For example, a group of children wanted to have a wedding, they were encouraged to reflect on what they already knew about weddings and what they would need. This included, baking a cake in the home area, writing invites, learning dances and making a dress. This meant that children discussed, planned and negotiated with each other to create the wedding. This gave children opportunities to negotiate, increase their skills and consolidate their learning.

Children benefitted from continuous access to the garden outdoors. This enabled children the freedom to make their own choices about the environment they wanted to play and learn in. There was a broad range of resources available to children outdoors, and they were confident to transport resources to and from the outdoor area as part of their play. Outdoor learning was enhanced through forest kindergarten sessions, allowing children to explore and learn in nature.

How good is our setting? 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children with very few areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from an environment that was clean, inviting and comfortable. Music, natural light and ventilation created a calming environment. Lamps and subtle lighting were used when the natural light became darker, making the space for children cosy and relaxing. Children's belongings were respected with coats hung on pegs and space for children to put their jackets on. This provided children and families with a sense of belonging and worth.

Children experienced positive role modelling from staff in their care for the environment and resources. Children were observed returning items after they had been played with. For example, a child had accidently knocked over a vase, and another child stated "we need to pick things up" and waited for the vase to be picked up. This demonstrated that they had an understanding of how to care for the environment and how to respectfully interact with others.

Areas of the building that were tired due to natural wear and tear were minimised by the attractive aesthetics in areas across the playroom. Wooden pallets were used as a crafting table, this enabled children to stand comfortably when crafting, and creations were displayed for children and parents to see, celebrating and recognising their achievements.

Effective measures were in place to ensure children's health and safety. The secure door entry system at the main entrance ensured children's safety, this was monitored further by staff during busier periods including pick up and drop of times. Effective infection prevention control measures were in place, including regular hand washing and cleaning of resources and equipment. The 'nose blowing station' was supported with visual prompt card to show children the process of blowing their noses correctly and hygienically, in addition to being accessible and attractively presented. This minimised the spread of infection. As a result of the systems in place children were kept safe throughout their daily interactions and play.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children with very few areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Effective systems were in place for quality assurance and self-evaluation. The team viewed improvements positively and were reflective. A quality assurance calendar plan created a balanced approach to operational tasks and self evaluation. For example, personal plans were reviewed at regular points across the year and focussed evaluations of children's experiences were planned for. As a result, improvements were being made at a steady pace. Management spoke positively about the level of reflection that was happening during team meetings and in service days. This demonstrated that the team have a very good understanding of self-evaluation and the benefits of reflective practice. For example, guidance documents and challenge questions were used to evaluate the mealtime experience for children. Staff were able to reflect objectively and respond positively to the changes that were made. This meant that changes were based on best practice guidance, ensuring that quality assurance was being carried out robustly.

The improvement plan was a shared document used across the team and shared with parents. Staff were responsible for developing aspects of the plan across the year, including literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, outdoors and the forest kindergarten. As a result staff were invested in the development of the improvement plan and created opportunities and experiences for children.

There was a shared vision across the service creating a nurturing and caring environment that empowered children, parents and staff. Staff and parents were able to share their interpretation of what that looks and feels like to them throughout the inspection and feedback. Staff had commented that they felt supported by the leadership team who were approachable. A parent commented that they could "ask staff anything, and felt reassured".

Children were consulted with through daily interactions, offered choices and their preferences respected. Children participated in the evaluation of mealtimes and their responses were included in the changes that were made. For example a child had commented that when serving dishes and food are on the table they can reach it. Another child commented that "no one steals your seat" when food is served from each table rather than the central serving station. We discussed with leaders ways to continue children's participation in developing the service further. This included more in depth consultations with children and rotational leadership roles.

How good is our staff team? 5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children with very few areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff were effectively deployed across the service ensuring there were enough staff in each area. Staff communicated well with each other ensuring that busier areas were supported by enough staff. For example, outdoors was accessible throughout the day to children and staff were responsive by being outdoors at busier times. This ensured that children were supported by staff to meet their needs.

Absences were managed effectively through the deployment of school and nursery staff. Supply staff were used for additional support, and management explained that this was usually staff who were familiar with the setting and had covered previously. A member of staff from supply during the inspection explained that they have covered previously and knew the staff, children and routines. Permanent staff provided guidance about the plans for the day, and information about children that was relevant to the staff on supply. This enabled plans for children's play and care to be implemented consistently. For example, continuing with seasonal plans outdoors that had been started with some children the previous day. As a result, children were cared for by familiar staff, with limited disruption to their care and play.

Inductions and mentoring approaches were in place for new staff. All staff were aware of the approaches and roles and responsibilities, either through their own experience and policies. There was a shared understanding that it was everyone's responsibility to make new people feel welcomed into the service. This meant that children experienced practice that was consistent, and staff were confident in supporting them.

Annual appraisals provided an opportunity for staff to reflect and plan for their own learning with the support from leaders. Staff spoke enthusiastically about their roles and the children. This meant that children were cared for by staff who were committed to the service and the 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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