Duddingston Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Duddingston Road
Edinburgh
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 March 2025

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002576

Service no:
CS2003017024

About the service

Duddingston Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 60 children at any one time aged from 3 years to primary school entry. The service is provided by the City of Edinburgh council. At the time of our inspection 60 children were registered with the service.

The service is located in a residential area in the east of Edinburgh. The service is close to a local bus service. The children are cared for in a purpose built nursery in the grounds of Duddingston Primary School. There is one large playroom, with a kitchen, toilets and a cloakroom which gives direct access to the large enclosed garden.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 18 March 2025 between 9:00 and 17:00, an announced visit to conclude the inspection was made on 19 March 2025 between 9:00 and 17:00. 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 nursery
- reviewed completed questionnaires from 19 parents
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff had built positive, trusting relationships with children and families.
- The majority of parents felt very involved in their child's time at nursery.
- Children benefitted from high quality play experiences based on their interests.
- Effective quality assurance and self evaluation impacted positively on outcomes for children.
- Children's rights were discussed and explored with children, this impacted positively on their emotional wellbeing.

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?	4 - 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 experienced warm, caring and nurturing approaches to support their overall wellbeing. Staff were patient and had fun with children. Practice by staff reflected families' personal preferences and promoted children's independence, privacy and dignity. Staff were aware of changes in a child's home life and used this information to sensitively support their emotional wellbeing. Parents told us 'We recently had a meeting with my child's key-worker where we were able to talk about their development and anything to do with their care. I also know I can always talk to the staff at the beginning or end of the day if I have any queries/ concerns' and 'Staff are lovely and very caring and helpful. They know not only each child but the parents and carers too. They are very accommodating and leave you feeling reassured your child is safe and happy in their care'. Where children required support with personal care, interactions throughout were warm, caring and nurtured children's security, confidence and positive relationships.

The nursery provided morning and afternoon snacks. Children were involved in the choosing, planning and ordering of ingredients for snack and the preparation of snack. This experience was also used as an opportunity for numeracy and literacy to be introduced to children in real life. For example, helping with the ordering, checking it when it was delivered, counting what had arrived. Children told us about the pancakes that they had made for snack and talked us through the recipe booklet. Lunches were provided from the school kitchen. Staff sat with children whilst they ate, in an unhurried and relaxed atmosphere, which contributed to a caring and social experience. The table was nicely presented, with a table runner and flowers. Children's independence was promoted through opportunities to self-serve and wash their dishes. Staff recognised these daily routines as a rich opportunity to promote close attachments. The lunchtime experience had recently been changed to a rolling lunch, so that children's play was not interrupted. This continued to be monitored to assess if it met the needs of children or could be further improved. Fresh water was available throughout the day and children were encouraged to remain hydrated.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through effective use of personal planning. Children and families were central to this process ensuring effective information sharing, which was used by staff to promote consistency and continuity of care. Parents verified this and told us 'The personal plan and discussions with the key worker provides a more detailed account of my child's learning and development on a one to one basis' and 'Key worker is happy to discuss and work out solutions if any issues or problems are shared'. This approach enabled staff to respond quickly, sensitively, and compassionately to changes in a child's life.

Caring staff worked proactively with children, families, and other professionals to identify appropriate next steps and strategies based on individual needs and prior learning. This information was used consistently and effectively by all to ensure positive outcomes. Staff spoke about the impact of training such as autism awareness and the Hanen approach (which supports the development of language, social and literacy skills), and the positive impact of this could be seen in practice. Staff were knowledgeable about the potential impact on children of adverse childhood experiences and implemented supports to build children and family resilience where needed.

Children's rights were being explored with children and information shared with parents. Children's views on their rights were recorded. Staff spoke about children's rights during daily experiences and children were respected and listened to. Respecting children's rights was embedded in practice. This was evident in staff interactions with children and the opportunities offered to them.

Quality indicator 1.3 : Play and learning

Children had fun and were engaged in a range of high-quality play experiences which impacted positively on their play and learning. They experienced a balance of spontaneous and planned activities and were confident and actively leading their own play. Staff also responded in the moment to enhance experiences for children. This promoted their curiosity, imagination, and critical thinking skills.

Staff were aware of the need for the environment to be rich in opportunities for children to engage in concepts and foster skills for learning. The environment reflected children's ideas, aspirations, curiosities and next steps in learning. Children's learning and voices were recorded in floor books, which they could revisit to consolidate their learning. For example, at the large brick area, children drew their ideas in the floorbook and were then supported to construct them. Children showed us the floorbook and some of their creations. Loose parts and additional small world resources and material enhanced children's creativity in the construction area.

Well considered innovations and creative approaches successfully engaged children's imagination and enriched their play and learning. Play experiences developed children's skills in language, literacy and numeracy. Staff were aware of the need for children to be able to apply concepts in real life and provided opportunities for children throughout the nursery environment. Examples included, children's stories which had been scribed by staff, these were then laminated alongside the child's drawing and were available in the story corner. Children took great pride in reading their stories to us. A colour mixing experience at the water tray, allowed children to mix colours, compare them on a colour chart and write the recipe for their potion. This was further supported by staff who were skilled in interactions and used effective questioning to extend children's thinking and consolidate their learning.

Numeracy and literacy were available throughout the environment (indoors and out). This included books, opportunities for children to mark make, jigsaws, binoculars and a sheet to record which birds they had seen. Resources to allow children to measure, sort, count and problem solve.

Staff had a very good understanding of child development theory and practice and skilfully used this to support high quality play and learning experiences. Their ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and reflective practice as a team supported this.

Children made informed choices about leading their play and learning within a stimulating, challenging and creative setting. Through observations and effective assessment of information using the developmental milestones and learning overview format (DMLOs), progress and achievements were recognised and enhanced. Any additional supports were identified, planned for and implemented. This highly responsive approach ensured children were developing a broad range of lifelong learning skills.

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

The setting was very comfortable, furnished to a high standard and welcoming, with plenty of natural light and ventilation. The entrance area displayed information for parents, and children had access to their own space to store their personal items. This helped to promote a sense of belonging. Children's artwork and mark making was displayed throughout the nursery. It gave a strong message to children that they mattered. They had ample space for their needs.

The indoor and outdoor environments were sensitively structured and took account of all children's stages of development and learning. Children had free-flow access to the garden throughout the day. Spaces reflected children's current interests and curiosities, with appropriate resources and materials to support learning. Children's play was continued outdoors as they transported their houses which they had made in the art area, outside for the worms. Parents were very positive about the time their child spent outdoor, telling us 'The garden has a variety of activities for the children, lots of different areas for them to play and lots of room for them to actively enjoy being with other children. They can ride bikes, scooters, play on the swing, play in the sand, play in the mud kitchen, and lots more areas', 'My child loves running, jumping, sand play, mud kitchen, writing with chalk, exploring rocks, plants, watching insects and birds' and 'My child enjoys taking part in mostly loose parts play when outdoors but also enjoyed activities recently making bird feeders and learning about the weather and what birds do in the colder weather'.

Staff worked well together to identify and remove risks to children within the setting both indoors and outdoors, across the whole day. Children were taught how to use resources, such as child sized spades safely, this resulted in them having real experiences, such as digging large holes to look for treasure. Staff ensured children were accounted for at all times and that the environment was secure and safe. In doing so children's activities are not compromised and they were supported to enjoy challenging, fun play experiences.

Robust infection prevention and control and food safety practices provided high levels of safety for children. All staff had appropriate and relevant training. These were supported by effective quality assurance practices.

An ongoing issue with the drains from the nursery meant that occasionally they could become blocked and overflowed, if not dealt with promptly. This posed a health and safety risk to children and staff. A solution had not yet been found to address this issue, however, staff remained vigilant to signs that this might happen. Any cases were reported immediately to action the clearing of the drains and prevent them from overflowing. The local authority continued to search for a permanent solution to this issue.

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 improvement are led well

Leaders promoted and sustained a shared vision for the nursery that reflected the aspirations of children, families, partners and the wider community. This helped all staff to know what was important for the nursery to meet the needs of children and families. Leaders created conditions where all staff felt confident to initiate well-informed change and shared responsibility for the process. This was evident through the leadership roles which staff had taken on and through which improvements had been made. Staff told us

that it was a cohesive staff team, where they felt empowered to have their voices heard and were well supported by leaders.

Leaders 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. Families had a range of opportunities to share their views. This included, through questionnaires, attending Stay and Play sessions, going on Spring and Autumn walks, parental consultations twice a year, as well as coming into the nursery to share their skills. Parents confirmed this as they told us 'We are consulted after every parent event and there are regular questionnaires about a range of topics', 'Always opportunities to provide feedback and contribute in various ways'.

Self-evaluation enabled the service to deliver high quality care and support tailored towards children's and families particular needs and choices. Room monitoring carried out monthly by leaders supported the development of staff, as they observed the impact of staff training such as Hanen, Autism awareness and Signalong. Monitoring was carried out in a supportive manner. Staff reflected well together and used these reflections to bring about positive change to outcomes for children and families.

Leaders ensured that high-quality learning through play was at the heart of improvement planning. The impact of this was visible through the high quality play experiences available for children, such as the expansion of the loose parts available to allow children to be creative and imaginative in their play.

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

The importance of ensuring that the nursery was appropriately staffed during the day was recognised by leaders as essential to the wellbeing of children. Effective use was made of the differing experience, knowledge and skills of the staff group to ensure children's experience across the whole day was positive and that they were safe.

Leadership roles empowered staff to take ownership of different areas within the nursery. This resulted in enthusiastic staff who were keen to share their ideas and introduce them into the nursery. This contributed to enhanced experiences for children.

Arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day and ensured positive transitions and communication with families. Leaders recognised the need for high levels of interaction and support to promote wellbeing and safety. Staff breaks were planned to minimise impact on the children whilst enabling staff to rest and be refreshed.

Arrangements for absence, whether planned or unplanned, were managed to support minimum disruption to children's routines. The presence of two early years officers, meant that there was always additional support available to ensure that children's needs were being met. Parents were positive about the staff within the setting and told us, 'There are always plenty of staff around for all the children - all the staff are experienced and competent and all know my child well' and 'There are always staff around when in the setting and my child loves the keyworker they have and always knows to go to them'.

Leaders promoted awareness of the need to effectively deploy staff within the nursery. Staff were proactive in recognising where gaps existed, and these were soon remedied. Staff communicated very well with their colleagues when a task took them away from their responsibilities. Staff worked together to ensure effective supervision and quality engagement with the children across the day.

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?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - 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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