George Heriot's School
Day Care of Children

Lauriston Place
Edinburgh
EH3 9EQ

Telephone: 0131 229 7263

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 March 2019

Service provided by:
George Heriot's School

Service provider number:
SP2007009285

Service no:
CS2003017027

About the service

George Heriot's School nursery (referred to as the service throughout this report) is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide care to a maximum of 40 children aged from three years to entry into primary school.

The service operates from a stand alone nursery building in the grounds of George Heriot's school in the centre of Edinburgh. The accommodation consists of a large playroom, which opens onto enclosed gardens, entrance hall, kitchen, toilets and an office. Children also have access to the wider school amenities. In the outdoors this includes the school grounds, sports fields and play areas and an area of woodland adjacent to the nursery. Indoors children regularly use the sports hall, dance studio, yoga studio, library and other parts of the building as appropriate.

The inspection took place on Tuesday 19 March 2019.

We check that services are meeting the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (also known as GIRFEC. Set up by the Scottish Government GIRFEC is a national approach to working in a consistent way with all children and young people. It is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. The approach helps services focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people- and what they can do to improve. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC. They are: safe; healthy; achieving; nurtured; active; respected; responsible and included.

What people told us

During the inspection we chatted to some of the children. Children were interested in the purpose of our visit, their pride in their nursery was apparent as they showed us round and talked about their favourite areas and interests. Their comments included:

"I can play outside, it's my favourite place to be. I can do a cartwheel I'll show you what to do if you want to learn."

"I love everything about nursery because it helps me to learn. We get stories, I'm going to be the big head teacher when I grow up."

"Everything is important, I learn about numbers, we play lots of fun games, we care about each other and we listen to the teachers."

Before the inspection took place we sent twelve Care Standards Questionnaires to the service for distribution to families. Eleven of these were returned to us before the inspection took place. Ten respondents told us they strongly agreed and one agreed with the statement "Overall, I am happy with the quality of care my child receives in this service." In addition we spoke to five parents as they picked up their children at the end of the day. The following representative comments were made:

"George Heriot's nursery provides a caring and stimulating environment for our child. The children are happy and learning important life skills as well as the basics of letters and numbers. Parents are encouraged to be involved and the children are involved in decisions about their environment and activities regularly. The staff are exceptional and they genuinely care about the children. The variety of activities is outstanding, with specialist teachers involved in many of them. We cannot praise the nursery and staff highly enough."

"Fantastic nursery with completely committed and dedicated staff. Our child absolutely loves it there."

"Great use of local environment e.g. meadows, school grounds. Staff are fantastic especially the four who are affiliated to the nursery full-time. They work so hard. Excellent."

"We have found Heriot's Nursery to be of an extremely high standard. The children are very well nurtured and provided with a wide range of specific and individualised activities. Of particular note is the fantastic way the staff use the indoor and outdoor space to provide children with similar experiences both in and out doors. We have found that our child has thrived under the care of Heriot's. Every day they come home having learned something new."

"We are thoroughly impressed by Heriot's nursery. The care our child has received is outstanding. The teaching is exemplary, the teachers have quickly identified our child's strengths and weaknesses and are helping them through play and fun learning in areas they have struggled in. We have been nothing but impressed by the nursery and staff."

"A high quality service that repeatedly exceeds our expectations. It undoubtedly stimulates and engages our children. The staff celebrate and recognise their individual strengths and give them the space to develop as individuals."

"Since joining Heriot's nursery we have seen our child develop and grow in so many ways. Staff nurture and support them providing valuable learning opportunities that link to their interests. They also identify areas where they are less confident, encouraging them to take risks. The feedback from the Early Learning skills screening was particularly useful in allowing us to gain an understanding of our child's strengths and areas for development and more able to support their learning at home. Parent postcards have reassured us that we are working in partnership to support our child's development. Every day our child goes into nursery happy and excited at the prospect of the day. As parents we could ask for little more."

"My child is very happy in the nursery. They go in with a smile and leave with a smile. They are animated at the end of the day with stories of all of their activities and learning."

"We have nothing but praise for the nursery team. It's exceptionally well led, everyone knows our child and seem genuinely interested not just in them but in all of the children."

"Deciding to enrol our child in Heriot's is the best decision we've made. Our child has been given such a positive, supportive and fun experience. We are full of praise for the staff who work hard to make sure every day is special and fun for our child."

"My child is happy and settled. The staff are kind and so experienced. They make my child feel special, I'm sure they do that for every child which is lovely. There is always something new going on to engage the children."

"Our expectations were high, and they have been exceeded. My child loves going to nursery and continues to be curious, interested and happy."

Self assessment

We did not ask the provider to complete a self assessment. We discussed the providers quality assurance procedures and development plan. We were satisfied with the information we saw on the day of the inspection which evidenced the providers ability to reflect, evaluate and continue to develop the existing excellent service provided.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	6 - Excellent
Quality of environment	6 - Excellent
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	not assessed

What the service does well

Children were busy, focused and enthusiastic. They experience an exceptional level of support and nurture from an experienced and dedicated staff team who were passionate about their role in supporting each child's learning and development. Staff's trust and respect for children was apparent in the way they used their ideas and interests to create activities and experiences which gave children a sense of wonder. This supported their learning and allowed them to develop their awareness of the world. Staff assessed activities throughout the day to ensure they continued to provide children with interest and challenge. The impact of this was that children saw their interests reflected throughout the nursery environment. This supported their sense of belonging to their nursery family.

A speech and language therapist and an educational physiologist carry out an early learning screening review on all nursery children. This helped to ensure that any additional support for learning required was given at an early stage helping to ensure that children's access to the opportunities of the service were maximised.

The Learning Enhancement Curriculum, introduced in nursery, and going on through primary school focused on supporting children to develop emotional literacy, a positive self image and a greater understanding on their impact on others. Each nursery session ended with a guided mediation which gave children the opportunity to relax and consolidate their learning. Positive outcomes were apparent in the confident way children worked together, making decisions and having mature conversations about how to resolve differences of opinion.

Children had access to professional teaching staff and use of facilities in the wider school, they include music, science and physical education and outdoor learning staff. The well resourced nursery environment gave children exceptional play and learning opportunities inside and outdoors. Quiet areas and group activities were available in all areas. Children had free flow access to the nursery garden and wildlife garden. In addition they were able to visit the adjacent woodland and pond. This gave children opportunities to learn about the natural world. Abundant loose parts in these areas allowed children to use their imagination creating structures and obstacles which were open ended and flexible. Staff understood the benefits to children of making their own decisions about the level of risk they wanted to take in their play. They were on hand to support and guide children, intervening with comments or questions only when they judged this would add value to the children's experience. We saw children flourish and have fun in this enabling environment.

What the service could do better

The staff team had developed a culture of reflection and continuous improvement. This had a positive impact on outcomes for children. We were confident that this excellent practice would be continued.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
26 Feb 2016	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	6 - Excellent 6 - Excellent 6 - Excellent 6 - Excellent
23 Jan 2013	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good 6 - Excellent 5 - Very good
4 Feb 2011	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	6 - Excellent Not assessed Not assessed Not assessed
5 Feb 2009	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	6 - Excellent 6 - Excellent 6 - Excellent 6 - Excellent

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