Holy Cross Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Craighall Road
Edinburgh
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Telephone: 01315 521 972

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 September 2026

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002576

Service no:
CS2003017033

About the service

Holy Cross Primary School Nursery provides a daycare of children service in Edinburgh. The service are registered to provide care to a maximum of 40 children aged 3 years to primary school age at each session. There are currently 30 children registered with the service.

The nursery consists of one large playroom, a kitchen area, toilets and changing facilities. The playroom has free flow access to a large, secure outdoor space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 September 2026 between 08:30 and 16:30 and 8 September 2026 between 08:30 and 10:30. Feedback was shared with the service on 8 September 2026.

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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

· spent time with 28 children using the service
· spoke to six parents during the inspection, and received five completed questionnaires from families and staff
· spoke with staff and the management team
· assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
· observed practice and daily life
· reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

• The staff team worked well together to provide quality outcomes and experiences for children.
• The service had developed positive relationships with families which supported effective sharing of information to fully meet children's needs.
• Children appeared to be happy, settled and engaged in a range of play experiences which promoted learning and development.
• Families were welcomed into the setting to take part in a range of learning opportunities with their child including stay and play sessions.
• The service had developed positive links with their local community which included a local care home that the children regularly visited.
• Staff knew children well and positive attachments were being formed. This supported children to share their feelings and emotions in a safe and nurturing environment.

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

Leadership 4 - Good

Quality indicator - Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children experienced care and support that was guided by a clear and shared vision, values and aims. The service had recently reviewed these in consultation with children, families and staff. The values were currently being embedded within daily practice by the staff team. This helped to create a positive environment where children felt respected, included and supported during their learning and development.

The service demonstrated a commitment to ongoing improvement through a focused improvement plan. Staff were knowledgeable about the key priorities identified for the year ahead. This shared understanding promoted a culture of reflective practice and ongoing improvement. This supported the service to improve outcomes for children and families.

A quality assurance calendar was in place, which provided structure to the monitoring and evaluating that took place throughout the year. The service carried out monitoring of practice, environments and children's experiences. Feedback was shared with staff and actions were identified to support improvement. The service were now revisiting these actions during staff meetings. This created the opportunity for reflection and discussion about the impact of changes on outcomes for children. This demonstrated an increasing focus on self-evaluation and continuous improvement. Audits of medication, accidents and incidents had not been completed recently. As a result, opportunities to identify trends, patterns and potential risks were being missed. Reintroducing these audits would strengthen and support safer practice and help ensure children's health, wellbeing and care needs continued to be met effectively.

Self-evaluation was supported through a reflective staff team. Staff used challenge questions, professional discussions and visits to other nurseries to evaluate their service and share best practice. Staff were keen to share the recent changes they had made to their indoor space. This had improved the quality of the learning environment for children. A parent shared, 'The staff go above and beyond the usual level of care and education at Holy Cross Nursery. They are always looking to improve and not settle for simply what has worked in the past. Their dedication to each child individually is exemplary.'

Annual conversations took place with staff which supported individual professional development. These meetings discussed performance goals, personal development priorities, a review of the year and employee and manager reflections. This helped to ensure staff were well supported to develop their practice, which resulted in positive outcomes for all.

Staff had recently taken on champion roles to support ongoing improvement within the service. These roles which included diversity, digital technology, literacy and emotional talks supported leadership skills and ownership of specific areas of practice. Staff spoke confidently about their plans and aspirations for these roles and highlighted how they intended to enhance play and learning for children.

The service used an induction checklist to support newly recruited staff and students. This approach provided staff with the knowledge they needed to meet the expectations of their role. We discussed that

the use of the 'Early learning and childcare: national induction resource' could further support their induction process.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality indicator - Playing, learning and developing

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children appeared happy and were actively engaged in purposeful play experiences. They demonstrated curiosity, creativity and early problem-solving skills as they explored construction resources, ramps, cars and dinosaurs. Opportunities to extend this learning were evident through the introduction of mathematical language during discussions. Staff effectively supported and extended children's learning through responsive interactions. As a result, children experienced quality play and learning opportunities that promoted engagement, communication and early mathematical language.

Children benefited from well-resourced learning environments both indoors and outdoors. This promoted creativity, curiosity and imagination. Meaningful provocations reflected children's current interests and encouraged engagement in story sharing and literacy experiences. Children created props linked to 'The Three Little Pigs' which developed their imagination and communication skills. A numeracy and literacy rich indoor environment further enhanced children's opportunities to develop language and communication skills during their engagement in play and learning.

Free flow access to a large outdoor play space, supported children to explore, be curious and develop critical thinking skills. A parent shared, 'My child loves playing outside at nursery, they have lots of things to play with in the garden.' The mud and sand areas, supported by a range of open-ended resources, encouraged children to dig, transport resources between areas and work together to problem solve. Children also worked together to create a vehicle using crates, chairs and small wooden blocks. There was laughter and discussions about where to travel to and who would drive during this sustained play experience. The staff team should continue to develop this outdoor space including the development of numeracy and literacy. This could provide a greater depth to children's outdoor play and learning opportunities.

The service had developed positive links within their local community. Children regularly visited a local care home to spend quality time with residents. The residents also visited the service and baked with children or took part in creative experiences. A parent shared, 'We can help out at trips. The trip to the care home was amazing and it was great to see how the older residents interacted with the children.' Children also visited the Royal Botanic Gardens, local library, parks and shops which extended their learning opportunities. As a result, children developed social skills, positive relationships and an awareness of their community. These real-life experiences enriched their learning and development.

Planning approaches were being further developed to strengthen the service's focus on intentional learning. Staff spoke confidently about responsive planning and demonstrated a clear understanding of how they observed, responded to and extended children's interests through play. A number of focus children were identified each week to support progression in their play, learning and development. Parents were actively involved in their child's learning journey through regular discussions with their child's key worker. This helped to promote a collaborative approach between home and the setting. It would be beneficial for the service to continue to develop its planning processes to ensure children consistently benefit from deeper learning experiences. This could build on their interests, strengths and individual developmental needs.

Children's learning and development was tracked through observations that were shared with families using an online learning journal. This supported parental involvement and partnership working. Some observations clearly identified children's progress and development of skills. Next steps in learning were in place for children. These were being developed to ensure they were clear, specific and measurable to support continued progression. As a result, children benefited from an approach to assessment that was becoming effective in identifying and supporting their individual learning and development needs.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Quality indicator - Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

A welcoming environment was provided for children and families which supported children to feel safe and secure. Interactions between staff and children were warm, kind and nurturing. Staff knew children well and were currently developing relationships with new children. Staff spoke about the importance of developing positive and trusting relationships with children and families. This promoted effective communication and ensured staff could meet the changing needs of children.

Children experienced nurturing and well-supported transitions into and from the setting. This helped them to feel secure, confident and settled. The flexible settling-in approach and strong partnership with parents promoted positive emotional wellbeing. Effective support for transitions to primary school helped children move on successfully and ensured continuity in their learning and development. Parents valued and appreciated the support provided throughout these key transition periods.

Children's health, wellbeing and dignity were promoted through respectful personal care practices. Positive interactions supported children to develop independence and provided them with an understanding of what was about to happen next. Effective infection prevention and control measures minimised the risk of spread of infection and supported children's overall wellbeing.

Mealtimes were a positive and meaningful learning experience where children developed independence, confidence and life skills. Children were encouraged to make choices and take responsibility for tasks such as serving food, pouring drinks and washing dishes. This developed their self-help skills and provided them with a sense of achievement. Warm and engaging interactions with staff created a relaxed and social atmosphere. This promoted communication, positive relationships and ensured children received support when needed.

Children's health, safety and wellbeing were supported through the safe and secure storage of medication. Consent forms were in place which ensured medication was administered appropriately. Discussions with the service identified opportunities to strengthen medication management systems, including aligning consent forms with current guidance and improving the recording of three-monthly medication reviews with families. These improvements would further enhance oversight, support effective partnership working with parents, and help ensure children's individual health needs continued to be fully met.

Children received consistent, responsive care that was tailored to their individual needs through the effective use of detailed and regularly reviewed personal plans. Strong communication and partnership working with families ensured that staff had a thorough understanding of each child's circumstances, preferences and changing needs. As a result, children benefited from consistent personalised support, continuity of care and approaches that promoted their wellbeing, development and positive experiences within the setting.

Strong partnerships with families contributed to positive outcomes for children and supported a welcoming, inclusive culture within the setting. Families were actively encouraged to participate in nursery life through a range of engagement opportunities. This helped them to feel valued and involved in their child's learning and development. One parent shared, 'There are lots of opportunities to come and spend time in the nursery throughout the year and my child really enjoys showing me all around the nursery on these stay and play dates.' Effective communication and meaningful collaboration between staff and parents promoted continuity of care, smooth transitions and shared understanding of children's needs. Another parent shared, 'It's like being part of a larger family with the staff and other parents.' As a result, children benefited from consistent support, enriching experiences and strong connections between home and the setting.

Complaints

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

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good

Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good

Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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