Toronto Primary School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Howden East
Livingston
EH54 6BN

Telephone: 01506 431 461

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 January 2024

Service provided by:
West Lothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002601

Service no:
CS2003017501

About the service

Toronto Primary School Nursery Class is provided by West Lothian Council and is registered to care for a maximum of 30 children aged from three years upwards but not yet attending primary school. Children access their 1140 hours funded early learning and childcare on a variety of attendance patterns.

The service is located within its own facilities within the primary school. The accommodation is comprised of two very large adjoining playrooms, a cloakroom area, appropriate changing areas and children's toilets. Children enjoy regular access to the school facilities. Children can access an enclosed outdoor area for outdoor play and learning.

The service is located within the residential area of Howden East in Livingston. It is close to local shops and public transport routes.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced which took place on Wednesday 31 January 2024 from 08:45- 17:45. 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 eight people using the service and five of their families
- spoke with 10 staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Children received a very high standard care and support. There was a strong and consistent focus on supporting children to build self-regulation skills, which laid a strong foundation for children's positive social and emotional development.
- Children were very happy, confident and motivated to lead their own learning and were being well-supported to reach their potential. They were having fun and making very good progress in their learning development.
- The setting was well-resourced to provide children with fun, stimulating and interesting experiences. Some additional resources, discussed at inspection, would enhance children's lunchtime experiences and access to digital learning.
- Well-developed systems for quality assurance and improvement planning ensured children experienced a high quality service that was well-led and managed.
- Children were thriving as result of the loving and holistic support they experienced from the committed and effective staff team.

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?	6 - Excellent
How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent

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 received a very high standard of care and support. Staff told us their approach to nurturing children's health and wellbeing was of paramount importance to them. We observed a staff team who were very warm, caring and loving towards children. Staff knew the children very well, demonstrating a well-rounded knowledge of children's needs, stages of development, personalities and family backgrounds. This enabled them to provide effective care that met children's individual needs.

Families agreed that the service was warm and nurturing. One parent commented: "All keyworkers know the kids' needs and wants and understand them." Staff recognised the importance of partnership and collaboration with families to meet children's needs. Each child was allocated a keyworker which offered children and families consistency and continuity of care and facilitated effective communications between families and staff working with their children. During our visit, we observed the arrangements for families to drop off and collect their children from the service. Each family was warmly welcomed at the entrance and there was ample time for a relaxed, mutual exchange of information about children. This system worked well and both families and staff appreciated and valued these times to chat about children.

Children's individual needs were documented well through personal plans developed in close conjunction with children (where age appropriate) and families. This reinforced the commitment of staff to work in collaboration with families to obtain information about children's health, safety and wellbeing needs and individual care routines. These arrangements enabled families to participate in setting individual targets for their children. These targets were closely monitored and reviewed meaningfully to ensure children reached their potential. This comprehensive approach to personal planning ensured children received the support they needed in a way that was tailored to meet their individual needs. Families strongly agreed that staff knew their children well, including what they liked and what was important for their care.

Comprehensive arrangements were in place to ensure that children requiring additional support, received the right support at the right time in a way that was sensitive to their needs. Effective partnership arrangements were in place with external agencies and professionals to ensure they planned together to meet children's identified needs and support children to realise their potential.

Children settled quickly at transition times and were comfortable and familiar with the daily routines. Children showed curiosity in the inspection process which demonstrated how confident and secure they felt in the setting. We could see that children felt a genuine ownership of the setting.

There was a strong and consistent focus on supporting children to build self-regulation skills, which laid a strong foundation for children's positive social and emotional development. We observed children sharing, taking turns (without the need for adult intervention), negotiating with, and listening to, each other. Children were well-supported to understand, discuss and manage their emotions in a way that was both sensitive and age-appropriate.

For children, self-regulation assists in key social and developmental milestones such as making friends and building social skills, learning and achieving at school, making good decisions and managing stress.

Children participated in snack preparation, learning about ways to keep themselves safe while preparing food. Children chatted with staff about different food colours and textures during this time. Children chose when, and if, they wanted to come for a snack. Healthy snacks were offered in the morning and afternoon. Children experienced a calm, sociable snack time with opportunities for making choices and developing independence skills through selecting food and pouring drinks themselves.

Children were served lunch in the playroom. We could see that children were familiar and comfortable with the lunchtime routine. Children had opportunities for making choices, serving food and pouring drinks for themselves. Lunch was pleasant and sociable with lots of lovely chatting at each table, although staff missed some opportunities to role model as they did not eat lunch with the children due to the limited space at the tables (see How good is our setting?)

Effective arrangements were in place to ensure all staff knew about children's dietary and health needs. Procedures for the safe storage and administration of medication were in place.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were very happy, confident and motivated to lead their own learning - indoors and outdoors. Staff were keen to offer increased opportunities for learning in the community, including forming inter-generational links with a local care home. Families agreed that their children received a high standard of care, play and learning.

Children were being well-supported to reach their potential. Staff had a strong understanding of child development and how children learn and told us how planning reflected children's expressed and observed interests and addressed next steps for learning. We found that planning was flexible and responsive, promoting creativity, inquiry and curiosity. Staff were skilled at setting up provocations to promote and extend learning. Our observations confirmed that children were encouraged to problem solve. Staff used questions effectively to encourage children to develop ideas and enhance and add depth to their learning.

Families told us that they were very happy with progress their children were making in learning and development.

A range of strategies was used to support children's emotional wellbeing and encourage children to build resilience. Staff used Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) effectively and had brought the SHANARRI (safe, healthy, active, nurtured, respected, responsible and included) wellbeing indicators to life using child-friendly characters. Children were developing an understanding of these wellbeing indicators and told us when they were keeping themselves safe and being responsible through taking on small duties and tasks to help staff and their peers.

Children had opportunities to promote language and communication through singing, storytelling and using rhyme. Children performed songs confidently and enthusiastically. They were learning how to sign and identify rhyming words at story time.

Literacy and numeracy were well-represented across the setting. Literacy and numeracy toolkits and baseline reporting were in place and well-used to ensure children's individual learning was captured and next steps and gaps were highlighted for action.

Floor books in each area highlighted children's involvement in learning across the curriculum through the effective use of mind maps and the child's voice. The floor books illustrated the very good opportunities children had to experience the breadth and depth across the curriculum.

Learning journals were attractive, accessible and clearly showed children's learning and progression, child voice, photos and artwork. We could see that staff had developed their practice in recording observations over time. Families enjoyed hearing about their children's learning and development and were able to attend individual meetings to hear about the progress their children were making. Families told us that they were fully involved and informed about their children's learning and development.

Across the setting, children listened well and followed instructions and directions well to keep themselves safe. As mentioned earlier, they were able to take turns and share resources with their peers. We observed lovely examples of children helping each other and being kind to each other without staff prompts.

Staff recognised the role of celebrating achievements in raising attainment. Staff discussed the importance of celebration and fun in building children's confidence and self-esteem.

We observed children having fun and making very good progress in their learning development. We observed, and participated in, lots of happy chats and discussions. Staff and children laughed together often.

How good is our setting? 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.

The setting was comfortable, furnished to a high standard and welcoming, with plenty of natural light and ventilation. There were two large connected playrooms, a bright cloakroom, a kitchen area, toilets and changing area. Children could freely access the adjoining outdoor play area for fresh air and active play. There was also access to school facilities. We discussed the need for some additional tables and chairs to enhance the lunchtime experience and to ensure children and staff had the space they needed.

The bright, welcoming entrance hall providing attractively displayed and useful information for families underlined the lovely welcoming ethos families received. There was a calm and relaxed atmosphere throughout the setting. Families told us how important it was to them that they felt welcome in the setting and commented:

"[The entrance area] helps us to speak out if we have any queries and it also gives us a chance to thank all the staff who are providing the help to our children."

Children were kept safe and secure within the setting with appropriate door entry systems, and stringent protocols in place to ensure gates were locked. Children could freely explore their environments both indoors and outdoors in the knowledge that comprehensive risk assessments were in place and staff understood how to keep them safe. Staff talked confidently about the arrangements that were in place to ensure children's safety and the dynamic approach to risk assessment. Staff were keen to help children to understand the need to keep themselves safe but also recognised the benefits children derived from setting their own safety limits and participating in risky play. Families were confident that their children were safe and commented on the improvements of the one-way system.

The outdoor area was resourced to provide children with fun, stimulating and interesting experiences. The leadership team and staff had worked hard to develop this area. We found that children could experience physical play and fresh air daily. They could access loose parts outside for open ended play, explore nature through planting and growing and science and water play. There were areas for mark-making, music, role play, small world and messy play.

From photographs and learning journals, we could see that children clearly loved being outdoors, however, due to very high winds and to ensure their safety, children spent limited time in the outdoor play area during our visit.

Playrooms were laid out attractively and effectively with high quality resources. Staff had taken time to ensure areas were interesting and appealing to children. Children could self-select from resources at child height. Wall displays were attractive and contained interesting information about children's learning and included many children's comments. The very large home corner was well-developed offering children rich opportunities for role play. We discussed the need to improve the resources available to allow children to access technology and digital learning.

Staff told us about their involvement in the recent improvements that had been made to the learning environment. They discussed the impact of these positive changes on outcomes for children and told us how the environment was under continuous review to ensure it was providing children with the challenge they needed.

Appropriate systems were in place to manage electronic information in line with general data protection requirements managed by the local authority.

There were effective systems in place to control and prevent the spread of infection within the service to protect staff and children. Nappy changing facilities and procedures complied with best practice guidance. Children and staff washed their hands regularly, with children being well-supported to carry out handwashing in line with best practice.

How good is our leadership? 6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

The leadership team was fully committed to continuous improvement within school as a whole and viewed the early learning and childcare setting as an integral part of the school. The leadership team worked very well together to provide effective support to the service, staff, families and children. The ethos of the service was welcoming and families valued the accessibility of the leadership team.

Priorities for improvement for the setting were set out within the service improvement plan, which was underpinned by relevant local and national guidance and legislative frameworks. We could see that this plan was a useful tool for improvement, outlining clear points for action, responsibilities and timescales. The priorities were clear, realistic and achievable. We could see that significant work had been undertaken to address the priorities set for the current school year and this had had a measurable, positive impact on outcomes for children and families. Regular consultation with families ensured their feedback was included in all improvement planning.

Staff understood that they had an important role to play in self-evaluation and told us how they used the Education Scotland document How good is our early learning and childcare? and our quality framework to explore their progress, development and practice to identify what had improved and what still needed to improve. This enabled them to identify strengths and areas to improve outcomes for children and their families. From self-assessment documentation, we could see clear records of regular staff discussions against each performance indicator which highlighted strengths and areas for improvement.

There was a clear allocation of roles for monitoring quality across the setting with very effective monitoring systems in place to assess quality. Clear recording systems ensured action arising from monitoring was addressed and reviewed to promote high quality service provision.

Staff told us their views and opinions were valued and respected and discussed improvements they had taken forward to improve outcomes for children and their families. Staff welcomed the opportunities they had to visit other early learning and childcare settings to exchange views and ideas on the implementation of best practice. Staff reflection following these visits outlined proposed changes to be taken forward and resources required based on good practice seen elsewhere.

The leadership team was committed to partnership and collaboration with children and families and regular discussion to identify ways the service could improve. Families were involved in regular stay and play sessions, 'nursery natters' informal meetings, volunteering opportunities and a weekly SWAY - a useful and interactive newsletter that was issued to encourage participation.

Families told us that they were very happy with the service and knew how to make comments and suggestions, if needed. They were very positive about their opportunities for involvement and engagement with the setting.

Appropriate arrangements were in place to record details of any accidents and incidents occurring and to pass this information on to families. Staff were trained in first aid to ensure they had the skills and confidence to react to any accidents or health issues arising. Accident and incident reports were audited regularly to ensure patterns and hazards could be identified and addressed promptly.

How good is our staff team? 6 - Excellent

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

The leadership team recognised the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed during the day as essential to the wellbeing of children in the service. Staff recognised the importance of compliance with prescribed adult to child ratios indoors and outdoors to keep children safe. Effective arrangements were in place to ensure staff absences caused as little disruption as possible. Staff used to cover absences were already known to children and families using the primary school, which ensured further continuity and consistency.

Staff told us they felt their contribution to the service was highly valued. They felt very well-supported in their roles, benefiting from the support of their colleagues and the accessibility of the leadership team. We observed a staff team who worked very well together and demonstrated very effective communication within the service and with families. Staff told us how important the support of their peers was to them in their daily routine. They talked about the support and relationships they had with each other and the huge impact this had on their ability to perform well. They told us they enjoyed their roles and looked forward to coming in to work.

Relationships within the staff team made an important contribution to the effectiveness of the service. Staff could rely upon each other. Children benefited from staff who were committed to providing care to the best of their abilities. They had a shared vision for the service and enjoyed their roles, valued their relationships with children and families and wanted to have fun at work. Families told us that the staff team was a huge asset to the service. Comments included: "The staff work as a team and are all very good at communicating with each other, all staff are very switched on, vigilant and all keyworkers know the kids' needs wants and understand them", "They are always happy", "The team is great, always friendly and welcoming, and always providing parents with the hope to have support and engage with our children", "My child's keyworker is an absolute credit to the nursery and was born to work with children" and "I think all staff should be recognised for their hard work and should know how appreciated they are."

We observed staff communicating effectively with their colleagues throughout the day in a way that was sensitive to the needs of children. All necessary housekeeping tasks were carried out with minimum disruption to the children's experiences, especially when a task took staff away from their responsibilities. This allowed staff to work co-operatively together to ensure effective supervision and positive engagement with children across the day. Staff told us how they were well-supported by each other and were vigilant in ensuring they could identify when a colleague needed some extra support. We found a staff team who were committed to promoting the wellbeing of their colleagues and recognising the positive impact this had on outcomes for children and their families.

All staff were registered to practice with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC) and had undertaken qualifications relevant to their roles and engaged in continuous professional learning. Staff were very confident in their roles and committed to providing quality outcomes to children, their families and the local community. They were confident and well-trained in their roles and responsibilities in protecting children from harm. They participated in continuous professional development to underpin their skills and experience and routinely reflected on the impact of this on their practice.

Children were safe and well-supervised at all times. A keyworker system was in place to ensure each child received consistency and continuity of care. We could see that children had developed strong attachments with their keyworkers and other staff within the setting. This ensured positive transitions for children and good communication with families. There was a stable and consistent core staff team within the setting, which ensured families always knew which staff were supporting their children.

Regular meetings provided staff with opportunities for professional dialogue around local and national best practice guidance, self-evaluation and discussion of practice issues. Staff told us that these meetings were a valuable forum to share information about children's needs and progress.

From our discussions with staff, and our observations of the time they devoted to talking with families, we could see they respected and valued the contribution of parents and carers. Staff valued their role in ensuring a holistic approach to the wellbeing of every child and family. Families told us how important it was to them that staff had positive relationships with their children.

Throughout our visit, staff treated children with respect and we could see that children had very positive relationships with staff. Staff knew children very well and responded considerately and patiently to their needs, conversations and questions. Interactions were well-timed and enhanced children's experiences. Staff were fun and enabling and empowering children to feel secure within the setting.

We found that children received very high quality care and were thriving as result of the loving and holistic support they experienced from their own keyworkers and all other members of the staff team.

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	6 - Excellent
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?	6 - Excellent
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	6 - Excellent

How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent
4.3 Staff deployment	6 - Excellent

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