Craigour Park Primary School Nursery Class
Day Care of Children

Craigour Park Primary School
Moredun Park Road
Edinburgh
EH17 7HL

Telephone: 01316 647 594

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 November 2023

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2003053485

About the service

Craigour Park Primary School Nursery Class is part of Craigour Primary School and is in the residential area of Moredun in the southeast of Edinburgh. The service is provided by City of Edinburgh Council.

The service is registered to provide an early learning and childcare service to a maximum of 60 children at any one time aged between three years and primary school entry. It is close to shops and transport links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 21 November 2023 between 09:15 and 16:30. We returned for a second announced visit on Wednesday 22 November 2023 between 9:15 and 16:00. 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 and observed children using the service.
- Received and reflected on written feedback from six parents.
- Spoke with staff and management.
- Observed practice, daily routines and children's experiences.
- Reviewed documents.

Feedback was given on Thursday 23 November 2023 by video call to the head teacher, depute head teacher, two Early Years Officers, and an Early Years Quality Improvement Education Officer from the City of Edinburgh Council.

Key messages

• Children benefited from kind and caring staff who had built positive relationships with families.

• Staff worked collaboratively with families and professionals, which supported children who required additional support.

• Management demonstrated commitment to improving the quality of the service. This meant that improvements were being made.. This included all areas for improvement from the last inspection being met.

• The service should continue to work on providing sufficient variety and challenge in learning experiences to enhance children's learning and progression.

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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning? 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 1.1 Nurturing care and support

All children were settled, happy, and mostly focussed and engaged in their play. Staff knew children's individual needs and stages of development well. This helped staff to support children to feel safe and secure, and to progress in their learning.

Transitions were carefully planned to support children and families to begin to build relationships and become familiar with the setting before starting the service. For example, a summer open day provided families with the opportunity to come in to visit, helping children to feel at ease and build confidence.

Staff understood that previous life experiences could potentially impact on children's wellbeing and progress. As a result, staff were skilled at helping children and their families to break down any barriers to improving outcomes for them. For example, effective partnership working with other professionals, such as health visitors, helped to provide the right care and support to enhance opportunities for children and their families.

Children and families benefited from respectful and trusting relationships being developed from the first contact with the service. Staff regularly supported and encouraged parents to join groups to engage in their children's play and learning. Similarly, staff signposted families to external agencies, such as housing support. This enhanced opportunities for children to feel safe and supported, enabling them to progress in their learning and development.

The personal planning approach was effectively used to gather valuable information about individual children. Plans were reviewed with children and families at least every six months to keep staff informed about children's current needs, preferences, and interests. This helped staff to provide the right support at the right time for children. A parent told us, "I am really happy with the support and experiences my child has received at this nursery."

Meals and snacks were nutritious and reflected current guidance, which helped to keep children healthy and to develop lifelong good habits around healthy eating. Food was appropriate to support children's individual cultural and dietary needs. Children were given opportunities to develop independence and important life skills through self-serving their food. This provided opportunities for children to make choices about what and how much food they would like to eat.

Lunch time was busy time of the day, with staff tending to be task orientated. This meant that they were not able to sit with children to provide a relaxed, sociable, and enjoyable experience. Management should consider how lunch and snack times can be improved to ensure that these experiences are consistently positive and social times, which promote close attachments. Staff were appreciative of the advice given and planned to improve mealtime experiences to allow children to consistently have these opportunities. We signposted the service to the best practice note: 'Keeping children safe: supporting positive mealtime experiences in early learning and childcare' (Care Inspectorate, 2022).

Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Most children were busy and having fun, leading their learning through spontaneous play with their friends. Children were able to make choices and follow their interests through uninterrupted play for most of the day. Children benefited from being able to move freely between the indoor and outdoor play spaces. Outdoor play was valued as an important aspect of children's play and learning. They were able to experience energetic physical play which supported the development of strength and confidence in their bodies. Parents appreciated that children were able to go outside when they wished. One parent said, "The kids are encouraged to go outside every day."

A range of play opportunities supported children's developing skills in language, literacy, and numeracy. Examples included singing, role play, reading stories and counting through active play opportunities. The environment was rich in text, to support children to recognise letters and numbers. Symbols were used to support children to follow and understand the sequence of routines.

Refreshed guidance and support from City of Edinburgh Council was supporting staff to further develop planning approaches and tracking of children's progress. Planned learning experiences were mostly relevant because they connected with children's interests through listening and responding to their opinions and ideas. Management were supporting staff to focus more on children's developing skills, when formulating planning. Similarly, to extend play and learning experiences, staff could further enhance planned play experiences, with more opportunities for appropriate adult input. Conversations with children could be further developed to provide structure and challenge to their learning, whilst also building on their interests. This would help staff to develop their skills to provide personalised, and challenging play experiences to support children to progress at a pace that is right for them.

Observations of children's learning were recorded online for parents to access at home. Records of learning were regular and showed a range of experiences, both in the nursery and out in the community. Observations sampled showed that staff recorded learned skills and achievements, and some showed that children were revisiting opportunities to develop identified next steps in learning. Plans were in place, which included best practice visits and training opportunities, to aid further improvement in this area. This will help staff to ensure that records and systems consistently capture progression in learning. Similarly, this could support staff to plan appropriately to extend children's learning, offering more opportunities for children to reach their full potential.

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 comfortable, furnished to a high standard, and was safe, secure, and well maintained. There was plenty of natural light and ventilation. As a result, children could thrive in a comfortable environment which enhanced good health and wellbeing. All parents who provided feedback about the quality of the setting agreed that the setting was well furnished, comfortable and homely.

Robust infection prevention and control, and food practices provided important levels of safety for children. For example, food preparation areas, children's play spaces and toilets were kept clean.

This reduced the risk of spread of infection, which helped to keep children safe and healthy.

Open-ended and real items were used to give an authentic experience to children and opportunities to explore and experiment. This increased children's understanding of the world and their skills through play. To further enhance some play spaces within the indoor environment, staff could consider extending the range of resources accessible to children. For example, introducing a broader range of play materials at the sand and water trays for children to be able to self-select. This would encourage children to further explore their thinking and to extend their ideas. Similarly, cosier spaces where children can fully relax and have some quiet time could be developed. Staff could also consider adding more resources into the role play area to further provoke play experiences. For example, children were observed washing dishes in the home area, but they had no cloth, tea towel or washing up liquid to enhance this play experience. Increasing the range of quality learning resources may further inspire children's creativity and enjoyment.

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 well led

Management demonstrated a high level of commitment to assuring quality through self-evaluation. The management team had introduced several quality assurance systems. As a result, the service had made a number of improvements since the last inspection, meeting all areas of improvement. The management team told us that, "The Early Years Team at City of Edinburgh Council have been very supportive, offering guidance and training throughout our improvement."

National best practice guidance was used as self-evaluation tools to monitor the quality of the service. This meant that children and families benefited from a service that had developed a culture of continuous improvement. Parents felt that the service was managed well, and one parent told us, "There is well established protocol and leadership."

Staff were being introduced to a self-evaluation approach to help them to reflect on and make improvements to experiences and outcomes for children. For example, recent reflections and improvements focussed on the quality of the environment. Improvements made had positively impacted on improving play and learning experiences for children. This created opportunities to support children to progress at a pace that is right for them to reach their full potential.

The management team had identified gaps and further areas for improvement, which were being actioned in the improvement plan. This included enhancing staff skill in recording where children were in their learning and possible next steps to support progress. Another priority was to ensure that staff were effectively deployed at busy times. This was to ensure that effective supervision and purposeful interactions provided children with quality care and support throughout the day.

There was a strong focus on seeking parent and families views to improve the quality of the service. Parents views were sought after attending various groups and stay and play sessions in the service. Parents were given choices about what support they might like when they were participating in groups. Parents chose healthy eating ideas. One parent shared that the support given to them about routines at home had been "lifechanging."

The use of online resources were used to seek parents' views about the development of the service, this included improvements made to the layout of the playrooms. Similarly, children's views were regularly sought through discussions and using mind maps to ask questions and record ideas. As a result, children and families were respected and valued contributors to the development of the service.

How good is our staff team? 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 4.3 Staff deployment

The staff team was stabilising following a period of change. For most of the time staff demonstrated genuine kindness and interest to the children in their care. As a result, children were happy and confident. Established positive relationships between staff and children resulted in children seeking out specific staff members for cuddles and reassurance. One parent shared, "The staff are really amazing, helpful, approachable and hands on when dealing with all the kids."

The importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed during the day was recognised by the management team as essential to the wellbeing of children in the service. However, to ensure that children's experiences across the whole day are positive, management could consider enhancing staffing levels at busier times. This should enhance positive staff interactions with children during busy periods and ensure that children are given the right care when needed.

Staff benefited from regular review meetings with management which focussed on developing practice. Staff were encouraged to reflect on their professional development in line with their codes of practice. Through looking back and looking forward, staff were encouraged to reflect on their skills and recent learning with colleagues. This included one staff member who had recently completed their advanced qualification being encouraged to share their learning from this with the team. This helped to support staff to develop their knowledge and skills to improve experiences and outcomes for children. Staff were given opportunities to embark on training and review best practice guidance to enhance their skills. For example, staff were being supported to observe and reflect on children's level of involvement during play. This provided opportunities for staff to consider their practice and how to develop this further to ensure that children were being fully supported to extend their learning through play.

Some staff felt that communication across the team could be enhanced to improve the quality of the service provided and to enhance outcomes for children. To further strengthen the staff team, more opportunities for staff to come together and discuss their work could be considered. This could encourage staff to share ideas and take on leadership roles within areas.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To support children's wellbeing, the provider should ensure that children receive care and comfort in a timely manner. This would require staff to be aware of where children are in the setting to enable them to support children to feel nurtured.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

This area for improvement was made on 3 February 2023.

Action taken since then

Children received care and comfort in a timely manner. Due to improvements made to the layout of the playrooms, staff were fully aware of where children were in the setting at all times. This enabled them to support children to feel nurtured.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's learning, the provider should ensure that observations of children are written in a meaningful manner and then used to provide learning opportunities to extend their learning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

This area for improvement was made on 3 February 2023.

Action taken since then

Observations of children's learning had improved. Staff recorded observations for individual children, which showed learning and achievements. Plans, which included best practice visits and training opportunities, were in place to ensure further improvement. From reviewing improvements plans it was evident that further support for staff was planned to ensure that records and systems consistently capture progression in learning. This will support staff to plan appropriately to extend children's learning, offering more opportunities for children to reach their full potential.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support children's learning and development, the provider should ensure that the environment is well resourced. This would allow children to lead their own learning and revisit areas to support their overall development and learning. Activities and resources should be planned to inspire curiosity, awe, and wonder in children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling' (HSCS 1.31).

This area for improvement was made on 3 February 2023.

Action taken since then

Management and staff have shown commitment to improving the learning environment. Opened ended resources inspired children's curiosity. As a result, children were engaged in and leading their learning.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

The provider should ensure that quality assurance processes are developed and implemented. These should be evidence based, identify areas for improvements, and have clear plans to develop the service and improve outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 3 February 2023.

Action taken since then

The focus and commitment placed on developing quality assurance processes resulted in several improvements to the service since the last inspection. For example, the layout of the playrooms meant that staff were now fully aware of where children were in the setting at all times. Improvements made were evidence based and areas that still required improving were identified. Clear plans were in place to continue to develop the service and improve outcomes for children. For example, best practice visits to another service to support staff to improve their skills to effectively plan to enhance children's learning.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

To support children's overall wellbeing and ensure that they receive appropriate support, the provider should ensure that staff are effectively deployed.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.14), and 'People have time to support and care for me and to speak to me' (HSCS 3.15).

This area for improvement was made on 3 February 2023.

Action taken since then

Staff and children were now based in one of the two playrooms. This resulted in the creation of smaller teams and more opportunities for key workers to spend quality time with their key children. Each team benefited from a balance of experienced and skilled staff. This helped to ensure positive outcomes for children through effective supervision and quality engagement throughout the day

This area for improvement has been met.

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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - 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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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