Melville Street Nursery
Day Care of Children

57 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7HL

Telephone: 0131 226 6184

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 December 2024

Service provided by:
Early Days Nursery Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2003002857

Service no:
CS2011281654

About the service

Melville Street Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 90 children at any one time aged from birth to not yet attending primary school.

Melville Street Nursery is provided by Early Days Nursery Ltd. The nursery is part of a group of four nurseries all located in the west end of Edinburgh City Centre.

The nursery accommodation is located over four floors. The baby and tweenie rooms are on the basement floor, the toddler room is located on the first floor and the pre-school room is on the second floor. There is an additional sensory room and further multipurpose room located on the third floor. There is a small garden to the rear of the property.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Thursday 5 December from 8:45 to 16:15 and Friday 6 December from 9:15 to 15:30. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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:

- gathered feedback from 32 family members of children using the service
- spoke with staff and management present on the days we visited the service
- gathered written feedback from nine staff using a survey
- observed staff practice and children's experiences on the days of our visits
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm and caring interactions which supported their overall wellbeing.

- Daily access to outdoor play supported children's health and wellbeing.

- The environment and play experiences should continue to be developed to support children engage meaningfully in their play and learning.

- Quality assurance processes were developed to support continuous improvement of the service.

- The staff team should continue to be developed as new members of staff share their skills, experience and knowledge.

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?	4 - 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

Children experienced warm and nurturing care from staff who knew them well and were responsive in their approach. Where children required personal care staff supported them with kindness and respect. For example, staff asked children before carrying out care routines such as nappy changing. This helped them feel secure and contributed to the positive relationships they had with staff. Parents who responded to our online survey told us, "Overall an excellent service and the staff and kids relationship share resemblance to a close-knit family" and "This is a fantastic nursery, (child) is incredibly happy."

Positive relationships formed helped children develop friendships with their peers. We saw staff facilitating conversations between children and helping them manage healthy conflict. They provided children with language to set boundaries, for example, "I don't like you doing that". This helped build children's empathy cooperation and emotional intelligence.

Children's wellbeing was effectively supported through personal planning. Key information was gathered to help staff provide individualised care. For example, health needs, sleep routines, dietary requirements and children's interests. All parents told us they felt fully involved in their child's care, and regularly reviewed their personal plan. However some parents felt the reviews could be improved and more thorough.

Staff were proactive in identifying children who needed additional support. The service consulted well with families, and other professionals where appropriate, to identify strategies and next steps for children. These included the use of object signifiers and singalong to support children's communication. We discussed with staff strategies should be kept current in line with children's changing needs. This included when children were transitioning across rooms, to ensure they were receiving the correct care.

Overall, sleep experiences were safe, and children were well supervised. Children were soothed and comforted in line with their preferences. Areas or rooms were adjusted to make them calmer for children to sleep and provided a positive experience for children.

Children's medical needs were supported by the safe storage of medication and information about the action to be taken by staff was documented. Staff had a good understanding of children's health needs. We discussed where some changes could be made to medication forms. For example, ensuring that signs and symptoms of allergies were clearly recorded on medication forms.

Most staff had completed child protection training and demonstrated a good understanding of the processes and procedures they would follow if they had any concerns about children's wellbeing. Staff understood their role and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Staff were familiar with organisational procedures and followed these, helping to keep children and families safe.

Mealtimes supported children to be independent, learning how to serve their own food and clearing away dishes. Snack times were relaxed and sociable and staff sat with children encouraging conversations and ensuring their safety. Rolling lunch had recently been introduced for older children which minimised

interruption to their play. However, this was not as relaxed as snack times and could be further enhanced to provide a more positive learning experience for children. The service provided a range of healthy home cooked meals throughout the day. During lunchtime some children had several helpings of only one course. We signposted the management team to best practice guidance 'setting the table'. This would support menu planning to ensure all meals were balanced and proportionate.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children benefitted from a range of play experiences and activities that supported their development and interests. This enabled them to lead their own play. These included large bricks, art and crafts, sand, water, and transport toys. Open ended resources helped children use their imagination, curiosity and investigation. As they played in the home corner children told us "I'm cooking chicken" and "I'm making tea".

Staff showed enthusiasm in their interactions with children and showed their play experiences and ideas were valued. Staff should continue to develop their skills and confidence in extending children's learning through meaningful conversations. This should include effective questioning techniques to promote deeper thinking during play.

Literacy and numeracy opportunities were provided through routines of the day. For example, storytelling and songs. Children could look at books and shared stories with staff throughout the session. Staff spoke to children, explaining and narrating what was happening and providing new language. Staff supported mathematical language when children were building towers with bricks, including, "bigger, taller and smaller." This helped extend children's learning and their ability to compare objects.

Planning approaches were both intentional and responsive to develop experiences for children. We saw children playing with ice in the water tray. This provided opportunities to develop their interest in weather conditions and experiment with temperatures. Planning for activities and experiences were explored in floor books and displayed for families, helping to involve them in their child's learning. These could be further developed to show how children are learning and to support them to revisit this learning.

Children's wellbeing was supported by daily access to outdoors. The service was making good use of the local community to extend the experiences on offer to children. These included visits to the library, local walks and weekly forest school sessions. This helped children to learn about their local area, build new skills and develop a respect for nature. Parents all agreed children had lots of opportunities to be outdoors. One parent told us "The nursery are always taking the children out to do fun activities and keep them very active".

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

Children benefitted from a welcoming environment which was warm, well-furnished, and comfortable. There was plenty of light and ventilation to support children's wellbeing. The entrance area displayed information for parents, and children had access to their own space to store their personal items. This helped promote a sense of belonging.

Children's safety was maintained with a secure main reception and the downstairs entrance had a security camera. Staff worked together to ensure that children were always accounted for, undertaking regular headcounts, such as when children moved between inside and outside, and when they arrived and left the setting. This contributed to keeping children safe.

Play spaces took account of children's current interests including well-resourced home corners across all playrooms. Spaces within the setting were well used including a sensory room and additional upstairs, playroom providing further opportunities and learning experiences. However, there were a number of disruptions to older children's play throughout the day when children were taken in groups to the upstairs playroom. Staff should review and reflect on children's activities and interests within the main playroom. This would help support sustained and meaningful play, providing challenge and extended learning.

Children's health was supported as effective procedures were in place to support infection prevention and control. This included effective handwashing by children and staff, routine cleaning of surfaces and adherence to nappy changing guidance. Staff were aware of their role in providing children with a clean environment and understood the importance of this.

Children had regular opportunities to be active, which promoted their health and wellbeing. Regular outdoor play using a range of equipment helped promote children's physical skills. For example children made an obstacle course, developing gross motor skills as they climbed and jumped. The outdoor area was small and should be fully utilised including provocations to the mud kitchen. This would support children's imagination and creativity.

How good is our leadership? 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 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The management and staff team engaged well with the inspection process and demonstrated a positive attitude towards change and improvement. There had been significant staff changes over the past year and the management team shared their plans and commitment to maintaining a settled and sustained service. Staff spoke positively about the management team and told us "They keep a calm environment" and "We have leaders who are very understanding and want to make sure everyone is feeling the best they can and have a positive view when coming to work".

The service improvement plan had been developed which identified key priorities for the following year. These included, developing a shared vision, effective use of assessment and staff wellbeing. Some staff told us they had been involved in the development of the plan however newer members of staff were not aware of the plan. The management team should continue to revisit the plan with all staff to ensure their was a team ownership of improvements within the service.

The team valued building positive relationships and connections with families. As well as day to day sharing of information and building relationships other opportunities included stay and play sessions, parents' evenings, encouraging parents to share their skills within playrooms and the children's committee. A recent parent meeting had given parents opportunities to share their views and staff felt it had been overall

positive. Staff had agreed parent participation as an area of improvement, and we discussed with them opportunities and further ways to involve parents in the evaluation of the service.

Self-evaluation was supported through a variety of quality assurance processes. This helped the leadership team and staff to assess and reflect on what worked well in the service and identify areas for development. For example, sharing of best practice documents, discussion through team meetings, leadership meetings and audits, such as medication procedures. Examples of monitoring staff practice was a two-way process as staff had requested observations of story time and mealtimes. This helped reflect on focussed activities and ensure positive experiences for children.

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

Staff were warm, nurturing and caring. They worked well together to create a welcoming environment for children and families. This helped to create a positive atmosphere for both staff and children. Staff told us that lots of changes within the team had been challenging over the past year, however, they felt positive and enthusiastic in moving forward. One staff member told us "Every day, coming to work feels enjoyable and I feel like I am given the platform to make the children's day a success and enjoyable one for them".

The nursery was appropriately staffed, and staff were suitably deployed throughout the day to meet children's needs. They were flexible in moving between areas to support the smooth running of the nursery and being responsive to individual children. Staff communicated regularly about children's individual needs and when a task took them away from their post, such as supporting toileting needs. The manager supported staff by spending regular time on the nursery floor. They should continue to review staffing over busy times of the day, including mealtimes to ensure all children's individual needs are met.

There was a mix of staff skills and knowledge across the service. This provided opportunities for good role models and mentoring of less experienced staff. This contributed towards positive experiences for children. The management team were visible and played a key role in promoting good practice. Staff were keen to support each other's professional development and spoke positively of their colleagues' strengths. This helped staff to work collaboratively to promote positive outcomes for children and families.

The service had an effective approach to staff training and meetings. These gave staff opportunities to reflect on priorities and plan for ongoing improvements. Most staff had completed mandatory training of child protection, food safety and first aid. They were also encouraged to build further skills and knowledge in areas of individual interests, these included outdoor play, additional support needs and managing challenging behaviour. Staff wellbeing had been a recent focus and included yoga, walks and breakfast together. This helped staff feel valued and improved morale and engagement.

Staff were safely recruited and were well supported by the induction process. A peer mentoring system helped new staff settle into their role and staff told us they felt more confident caring for children as a result. Staff told us the induction had been thorough and helped them to understand their roles and responsibilities to feel confident in their role.

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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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