

Arcadia@Kings Buildings Day Care of Children

Max Born Crescent
Kings Buildings
Edinburgh
EH9 3BF

Telephone: 01316517249

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 June 2026

Service provided by:
UOE Accommodation Limited

Service provider number:
SP2018013124

Service no:
CS2018368538

About the service

Arcadia@Kings Buildings is provided by UOE Accommodation Limited. The service was registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 113 children at any one time aged between three months and primary school entry.

The service is located in the University of Edinburgh Kings Buildings campus. The building consisted of a reception area with access to an upstairs office and staff spaces. There were three open plan spaces that accommodated the babies, children aged two to three years, and children aged three to school age. There was a central dining space, and all rooms had direct access to the large outdoor area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 16 June 2026 between 09:40 and 17:15, and Wednesday 17 June 2026 between 09:00 and 17:00. 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 throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluations we:

- spent time with children using the service
- spoke with eight families and received 17 completed questionnaires from families
- received five completed questionnaires from staff members
- spoke to staff and the management team
- observed interactions, routines, practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.

As part of this inspection, we assessed 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, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvement is necessary within the relevant quality indicator.

Key messages

- Staff were passionate about children's care and experiences, leading to a nurturing atmosphere.
- Children benefited from improvement planning systems as staff reflected on children's experiences.
- A commitment to outdoor play and learning in the community contributed positively to children's wellbeing and development.
- Planning for children's skills development through experiences would enhance children's learning.
- A nutritious menu and social meal experience were supporting children to develop a positive relationship with healthy foods.
- Children's personal planning information should be used to develop experiences for all children, with clear strategies of support for individual children. This could support all children to be included and achieving.
- Recent events with families were building relationships and contributing to a strong learning community.

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.

The service demonstrated a commitment to its vision, values and aims. Values were reflected in daily practice as the staff team were passionate about providing a nurturing and responsive experience for children. There was a developing awareness about how the environment could inspire children in play and learning. Respect for children was seen through listening to children, and responding in calm, supportive ways. Parent feedback told us families received a warm welcome in the service. Further consultation with children and families could further strengthen the service vision, values and aims.

Children benefited from improvement planning as staff reflected on children's experiences. For example, the mealtime experience for children had been improved to include safe supervision, and children's independence and social opportunities. A developing culture of shared practice and staff growth was being supported by staff training and opportunities for staff to lead change based on their strengths and interests. For example, one staff member lead the nature school experiences with the wider staff team learning skills to support outdoor play. Continued sustainable improvement work could support the children as change is introduced in a meaningful way.

Quality assurance activities helped to ensure change had positive outcomes for children. Staff told us children had responded to the opening of play spaces to improve the flow of play, and creating cosy corners for them. We saw children's engagement in outdoor spaces where literacy and construction had been introduced. Regular review of staff deployment was effective in keeping children safe and supporting children's choices throughout the day. Moving forward the service could consider how to be more proactive with some aspects of practice. For example developing more accurate information about where children are playing across indoor and outdoor spaces to support effect monitoring.

A positive induction process allowed new staff to build relationships with children. New staff felt well supported joining the staff team. Regular agency staff were in use to support children's security and wellbeing. The service were developing systems to share with families who was currently working with their children in the room so that all families felt well informed. Records related to safer recruitment procedures showed that the necessary checks were complete to keep children safe. Staff appraisals and development opportunities were fostering leadership opportunities for staff members to use their passions and skills to support children's learning and play. Ownership of learning in the staff team was encouraged, with a staff member of the month recognised for learning and contributions.

Staff were secure in policies and procedures that supported children's wellbeing and safety. For example, they spoke confidently about child protection procedures and their duty to highlight concerns. This meant staff were clear about actions to keep children safe.

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.

The majority of children had fun during their play experiences. They interacted positively with staff and other children while they played and explored. Staff were kind, gentle and nurturing in their interactions with children. Staff responded to children's requests and needs when children approached them. Most children received time and attention from the staff team. We highlighted that quieter children could benefit from a planned approach to ensure their engagement is supported consistently.

A range of play spaces and opportunities meant most children were engaged in a variety of play and learning. This included construction, art, sports games and sensory exploration such as sand and bubbles. Children engaged in imaginative and deep play in some areas. For example, some children enjoyed the quiet and played for an extended time focussing on skills related to exploring the playdough. Others enjoyed building in the construction area wearing hard hats and goggles, inspired by visuals from around the world. Children could tell us the safety rules that they co-created with staff to play safely in this area. The ongoing review of children's play spaces should continue to ensure engagement across the play spaces.

Free flow opportunities to move between indoor and outdoor spaces promoted children's choice and wellbeing. A parent said: "My child loves exploring the garden, playing with water and sand, and being active outside with their friends." We saw children outdoors in extended deep, social play exploring pipes and water to create wet mud. This was used to fill ice cube trays and spread on a frying pan. Outdoor exploration was extended by planned nature school experiences in outdoors spaces in the community. Regular walks, bus trips and outings to the library supported children's learning about nature and their local area. Monthly intergenerational work with a local care home was supporting children to learn about other people in the community and develop their social skills.

Further planning of literacy and numeracy opportunities could benefit children throughout the setting. Books were accessible in most areas with some songs and puppets used in storytelling. Consistency around the use of objects, visuals and planned language would enhance early communication skills including language development. We saw numeracy opportunities highlighted in some experiences such as baking cookies and pouring at the water tray. Further planning for numeracy, maths and digital technologies would support children's skills development. Some staff displayed examples of supporting children to develop their thinking with a focus on their skills. Moving forward, the service should support staff to provide conversations with children to promote their thinking skills more consistently. We advised the service to plan for aspects of learning such as higher order thinking skills and language development.

Planning to provide a balance of intentional and responsive experiences was developing. Knowledge about families and children was being considered in some aspects of planning for learning, for example including parents in cultural celebrations. Some experiences were supporting children to learn new skills. A greater focus on planning for children's skills development would contribute to children's experiences and give clarity to individual children's next steps. Learning observations were shared digitally with families which communicated children's experiences.

Focussing on individual children's skills development through observations would support children's progression and the continuity of their learning. (See Area for Improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To promote children's skills development through play and learning experiences, the provider should develop observations, and intentional and responsive planning of provision to meet children's needs and interests, supporting them to grow and learn.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.31).

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.

Staff knew children well and spoke with families daily to discuss home life and individual needs. This supported staff to respond to changes in children's development and family life. Most children appeared confident and let staff know when they needed reassurance and comfort. This meant that positive relationships were supporting children's experiences. The service could develop staff practice around picking up on non-verbal cues for attention to ensure that quieter children's needs are consistently met.

Mealtimes were planned to support children's independence and social experiences. The dining space was set up to invite most ages and stages to eat in the space, with the youngest children having mealtimes in their baby room for familiarity. Children had a nurturing and calm experience to enjoy the foods cooked on site. An updated menu gave the children access to nutritious options in keeping with current nutrition guidance. Staff supported the children with social discussions about the food and tastes, and supervised children to keep them safe. Older children were observed choosing cutlery, self-serving vegetables and clearing away their dishes. Dishes adapted to meet dietary requirements and allergies matched the main menu, meaning all children felt included. We advised that handwashing after mealtimes should be consistent to reduce the potential spread of infection.

The service had quiet spaces available for children to access sleeps in all rooms. Staff responded to children's cues for needing sleep and provided this responsively. Safe sleep guidance was followed to help to ensure children's safety with nurturing care helping children to settle with comfort items and staff reassurance. The service should continue to develop their policies and procedures around sleep planning to ensure these are positive experiences for all children in consultation with families and professionals. For example, considering the impact on children's wellbeing of waking them from their nap.

Children's privacy and dignity were supported through suitable toilet facilities and toilet learning approaches. Staff valued children's rights when supporting with their personal care. Toilet learning could be strengthened for some younger children in the 0-2 room by considering easier access to facilities.

Improvements in children's personal planning had gathered information about children within legislative requirements. Staff were working with families to ensure information about children was being updated within six months, or sooner if required. Information gathered about children should now be used to plan for children's experiences. This should include identifying strategies and supports for children where additional support is needed. A parent told us: "I am very keen to see the outcomes of my child's plan and I would also like to help my child work towards some of the objectives whilst outside of the nursery setting." Leaders spoke of the progress they had made with personal planning and an area for improvement has been made to support this ongoing work (See Area for Improvement 1).

Parents reported being welcomed into the service and being able to approach familiar staff. A parent shared: "I feel comfortable in being able to talk to staff about updates from home and know that they would tell me if they had any concerns about my child at nursery." Newer staff were being introduced via digital updates and newsletters, ensuring families had access to information about staff changes. Recent events, such as a Saturday fun day and grandparent breakfast were strengthening relationships within the learning community and contributing to a vision of partnership working. This reflected that partnership working was beginning to make families feel included and valued in the life of the service.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children experience care and support that meets their needs, the provider should use information from children's personal planning to contribute to their care, play and learning. This should include providing support strategies for children to promote their individual development.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, 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).

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

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