Victoria Primary Early Learning and Childcare
Day Care of Children

1 Windrush Drive
Edinburgh
EH6 4TN

Telephone: 0131 4767306

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
16 November 2023

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002576

Service no:
CS2022000047

About the service

Victoria Primary Early Learning and Childcare is registered to provide a service to a maximum of 80 children aged between two years and primary school entry at any one time. No more than 15 children are aged two years. The service is provided by the City of Edinburgh Council. The service is located within an residential area in Newhaven, Edinburgh. Within the premises, children have access to a large playroom with an adjoining playroom called the Lighthouse. An enclosed garden is available for outside play. The service is close to local shops and parks and has good transport links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 13 November 2023 between the hours of 09:00 and 16:30. We returned to complete the inspection on Tuesday 14 November 2023 between the hours of 09:30 and 16:45. 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 the last inspection report, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection. In making our evaluations of the service we:

- received seven responses from parents to our electronic request for feedback
- received seven responses from staff to our electronic request for feedback
- spoke with and interacted with children
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents relating to children's care and learning and the management of the service.

We provided in-person feedback to the service on 16 November 2023. Attendees, in addition to the lead inspector and co-inspector, were the registered manager, two senior practitioners and a representative from the City of Edinburgh Council.

Key messages

Children's emotional wellbeing benefited from nurturing interactions with staff.

Personal plans for children should be reviewed in a timely manner, at least every six months. Information within these should be streamlined to help promote continuity of support for children.

Planning approaches were developing to become more child centred.

The door leading into the playroom from the main entrance needs to be secure to increase children's safety.

There was a strong commitment to making families feel welcome and involving them in the life of the service.

Quality assurance systems should be improved to clearly document the reasoning behind improvements being made, along with the desired and actual outcomes for children.

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 had developed nurturing relationships with staff. For example, staff acknowledged children's emotions and provided close comfort in the form of cuddles. These approaches resulted in the children feeing calm and ready to return to play. This warmth and kindness contributed to children feeling loved and secure.

Snack time was a relaxing, sociable experience for children. However, lunch times needed improved to replicate this more pleasant atmosphere and pace. This would benefit children's emotional wellbeing and enable children to gain from the rich learning opportunities that mealtimes should consistently provide. Self-serving opportunities were limited at lunch time and children's main meal was plated for them. However, the service had plans to build upon opportunities for promoting self-serving. This would not only increase children's independence skills and ability to make choices, but prevent delays in children waiting for food.

A new care plan had been introduced. However, this was not reviewed within a timely manner. On discussion, we were confident that this would be addressed moving forward with the help of the quality assurance calendar. Children with additional support needs had a child's plan and regular child planning meetings. We advised the service to summarise children's support needs and strategies to help promote continuity within the staff team (see area for improvement).

The service had invested in building multi-agency relationships to help the team to better understand and meet children's needs. This was supporting children to progress well. For example, the staff team had used effective support strategies, including sign a long to help children engage with and understand the lunchtime routine. The service was receptive to our suggestion to identify common needs amongst children and embed support strategies that would benefit several children. This would help promote continuity so staff collectively achieve positive outcomes for children.

Staff were confident with recognising potential indicators of abuse and child protection reporting processes. The service should ensure consistent use of chronologies to record significant information for children. Having clear documentation will support staff to get it right for children.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Opportunities were increasing for children to lead their play. The service had focused on ensuring core provision was more evident which provided areas with greater definition and learning opportunities. 'The Big book' was used to consult with children, capturing their interests and voices. The service now needs to build upon this to extend children's ideas further to offer children developmental challenge. To build all staff's skills and confidence in supporting children to lead their play, the service should develop mentoring and coaching approaches.

Planning approaches were developing to become more child centred. For example, at the end of each session, a member of the leadership team skilfully facilitated reflections amongst the team to share observations. This involved discussions on the significance of children's learning and considering ways to support children to make developmental progress. Within this, staff were supported to be curious to consider what children may be communicating through their behaviour and ways to support children. These planning approaches should be embedded to enable staff to help children reach their full potential (see area for improvement).

Staff could talk insightfully of children's needs and about the significance of their observations. However, the significance of children's learning needs to be clear within the actual observation. There were no next steps within online learning journals. However, we had confidence in the daily staff reflections to help staff to support children to achieve. These daily meetings should continue to take place and quality assurance systems should help track that these meetings have the desired impact on outcomes for children. Staff were further developing their knowledge of child development by using tools to assess children's stages of development. Resources were used, such as 'up, up and away' to help identify next steps. This included the use of postcards to share support strategies and learning opportunities to strengthen the parent partnership.

Children benefited from staff who showed interest in their play. Some staff extended children's thinking. For example, children noticed that the playdough was sticky. A staff member encouraged the children to problem solve and the children identified oil to help. All staff should be supported to add greater depth to children's play.

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's care, learning and development, the provider should ensure personal planning is effective. This should include but is not limited to making sure children's personal plans are reviewed at a minimum of every six months, that children's support needs are documented concisely and that support strategies are explicit to help promote continuity within the staff team.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as my care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.16).

2. To support children's care, learning and development, the provider should ensure that child centred planning approaches are embedded. This should include but is not limited to considering the significance of observations, to implement and review the effectiveness of children's support strategies and to identify and implement next steps to enable children to make developmental progress.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27) and 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

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 nursery building contained high quality furnishings and comfortable seating areas. Large windows let in natural light and lighting could be dimmed to suit people's preferences. This all contributed to a nurturing ethos and children's sense of wellbeing. Children's creative work was attractively displayed around the nursery which provided a sense of ownership and increased their self-esteem. A parent shared; "I find the service incredibly welcoming with excellent facilities."

Children benefited from space to move freely. Easy access was provided from the playroom into the large garden area. The nursery had adapted play spaces to reflect children's needs and interests. For example, a larger table had been provided for the art area. A smaller room joined onto the main playroom which children had voted to call the 'lighthouse' was available for children to experience a sense of calm. Within the 'lighthouse' children's sensory development was promoted as they used lavender scents and petals within their creative play. Attention now needs to be given to ensuring all areas are set up and accessible for children. For example, we noticed that the wood work bench was closed which meant there were missed learning opportunities. We observed low levels of engagement in the music area. The service should now closely examine all areas of core provision to ensure they spark a sense of awe and wonder to add breadth and depth to children's learning.

The setting was clean and well maintained. We shared our concerns regarding the door leading into the cloakroom area which can easily be opened by children. We acknowledged that the service had made many attempts to have this addressed but this now needs to be prioritised and actioned swiftly by the service provider. Mitigations were in place to reduce the likelihood of a child leaving unattended through senior staff being extra vigilant and manning the area. However, meant staff were taken away from other commitments (see area for improvement).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's care and safety, the provider should ensure that the door leading into the children's cloakroom is secure and cannot be opened by children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17).

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

Leaders had a strong vision for the service based on children's rights and wellbeing. There were references to children's rights on display throughout the playroom. Staff were supported to reflect on their practice through team meetings and one to one meetings to help promote child centred practice.

Staff were involved in taking forward areas identified within the setting's improvement plan. For example, one of the main focuses for the service was to ensure families felt welcomed and valued. There was a strong sense of commitment to engaging parents in the life of the centre. A quality framework for day-care of children, childminders and school-aged children (Care Inspectorate, 2022) had been used to involve parents in self-evaluating the service. Parent's views had been gathered on what they hoped their children would gain from attending the nursery. One parent told us; "I always feel that everything is well considered and that feedback is appreciated and acted on". Parents were invited to stay and play sessions which involved using best practice guidance to increase parent's knowledge on the benefits of outdoor play. Through distributive leadership, some staff had undertaken training to provide family learning opportunities. Reflective practice had prompted the service to provide more informal opportunities to build relationships with parents, for example, through coffee mornings. This demonstrated the service's strong value base in being sensitive towards people's needs and preferences.

Quality assurance systems were being introduced. For example, there were plans to formalise practice observations and introduce peer observations. The management team had a good understanding of staff's skills and used a strengths based approach to support staff to develop their practice. For example, children's key workers had been empowered to enhance their leadership skills by facilitating children's 'Child Planning Meetings'. This meant that children benefited from a staff team who were motivated to develop their knowledge and skills to help get it right for them. The service should now develop quality assurance approaches to identify what they hope children and families will gain from experiences and assess the actual difference made (see area for improvement).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's care, learning and development, the service should ensure that quality assurance systems lead to positive outcomes for children. This should include but is not limited to introducing and embedding formal observations of staff practice facilitated by the management team, introducing peer observations and demonstrating the improvement journey as to how an improvement has been identified, what the success criteria is and what positive outcomes have been achieved for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the 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).

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 service had invested in building a cohesive team with shared values. We observed staff commend their colleagues on how they had supported children to achieve. This positively contributed to staff morale. We heard how leaders were developing their skills to support staff to improve their practice. For example, supporting staff to make sound judgements to know when to interact with children and when to observe so children's own play agenda was respected. One parent commented; "The staff team are friendly, welcoming and provide feedback on our child's day."

During the inspection, staff to child ratios were met. As service numbers had not yet reached capacity, where there were staff absences, children benefited from the presence of familiar adults. Effective absence management processes had resulted in a reduction in staff absences. The senior leadership team extended a compassionate approach to staff and empowered staff to access resources to increase their health and wellbeing.

There was a mix of staff skill set and experience. To support staff practice, mentors were in place. Some staff were studying or were about to undertake leadership training, inspiring a culture of continuous professional development. We heard how these courses were promoting child centred practice. For example, a senior staff member had consulted with children on their preferences for play and observed children to use certain areas to play. This helped inspire a culture of demonstrating curiosity towards children's behaviour, placing children at the heart of helping to shape the service. We acknowledged the passion and knowledge of the senior leadership team. We felt it would be beneficial for them to increase opportunities to role model and coach staff with their practice on the floor. We were confident that that this would be acted upon. This would help embed and sustain improvements by building upon staff skills and knowledge.

Staff were being empowered to take greater ownership for ensuring play spaces reflected children's needs and interests. For example, staff were allocated areas of the playroom and garden on a two weekly rota. Staff's sense of purpose and responsibility within these areas was increased through the expectation to share their observations of children during daily staff meetings. We acknowledged the vast open spaces indoors and outdoors. The service should continue to reflect on staff deployment and staffing levels to ensure effective supervision of all areas.

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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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