Canaan Lane Primary Early Learning and Childcare
Day Care of Children

Canaan Lane Primary School
35 Canaan Lane
Edinburgh
EH10 4SG

Telephone: 01312002000

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 January 2025

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002576

Service no:
CS2022000245

About the service

Canaan Lane Primary Early Learning and Childcare is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 80 children aged between two years and primary school entry at any one time. No more than 15 can be aged two to three years. The service is provided by City of Edinburgh Council.

Situated in a new building on the grounds of the primary school, the service comprises of a large open-plan playroom with a smaller room, a cloakroom and toilet facilities. A parents room is also available for parents to use.

Local bus routes serve the area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 8 January 2025 between the hours of 10:00 and 15:15. We returned to complete the inspection on 9 January 2025 between the hours of 10:30 and 16:00. The inspection was carried out by one inspector.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included the registration report, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since registration.

In making our evaluations of the service we:
- spoke to and interacted with children using the service
- spoke with the staff and manager
- observed practice, daily routines and children's experiences
- reviewed documents in the service relating to children's care, play and learning
- took into account online feedback we received from 25 families and spoke with one parent.

We provided feedback to the manager and a local authority representation by videocall on 10 January 2025.

Key messages

- Children's wellbeing was nurtured through secure relationships, compassionate care and thoughtful interactions.
- Staff had high aspirations for children and themselves as learners. As a result, a shared ethos of being curious, trying ideas and learning from their actions was evident.
- Children benefitted from a safe, welcoming and inspiring environment in which they could flourish.
- The strong staff team demonstrated knowledge and commitment to children's rights and person-centred practice, with the aim of getting it right for each child.
- A proactive and insightful approach to improvement planning meant that the provision continued to develop to benefit 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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

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 were nurtured and supported throughout their daily experiences. Staff knew their individual needs and preferences and used them to provide responsive care. Children were listened to with compassion and genuine interest as connections and relationships were made with staff. Their feelings were acknowledged and physical comfort was given when needed. The outcome of this was happy, engaged and confident children.

Food experiences were calm, safe and thoughtfully planned to ensure children were actively involved. During the provision of snacks, lunch and cooking activities, children had opportunities to independently learn skills, such as weighing, chopping and serving. Staff sat with children providing social support and practical assistance if needed. This meant children were developing a positive relationship with food. A parent said, "My child has learned to be much more independent and confident since joining Canaan Lane."

The pace of the day had a structure to it which provided children with a familiar flow. For example, children had daily gather times and went to lunch in the school lunch hall as small groups. Staff monitored the use of these routines to ensure they remained purposeful and engaging for all children. In addition, staff were monitoring the impact the routines may have on children's play. For example, if children's choice in play was being affected by the garden being closed at points in the day.

Children's individual wellbeing benefitted from the effective use of personal planning. Children and parents were central in leading the content of personal plans, resulting in continuous care between home and the setting. Staff spoke confidently and sensitively about children's emotional needs and recognised the impact of situations on children. Personal plans were detailed, practical and reflective of individual children. Regular reviews kept information current and relevant. Where additional supports were needed, staff worked with other agencies to ensure children got the support they needed.

Children were kept healthy as medication was managed effectively. To further improve the management of non-medicated health conditions, more detail about symptoms and actions to take should be recorded for staff's reference. While health needs were reviewed with parents, these should also be recorded to support consistent quality assurance of the information.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning
Children had fun as they experienced high quality play, learning and development opportunities. They competently used resources and staff in complex play situations to enhance their thinking and physical skills. All children engaged in prolonged periods of play with their peers, being inspired by their environment to develop their ideas. A parent said, "My child loves the varied activities and stimulating discussions. The staff respond to their interests and nurture them. They love cooking and building and painting. Playing in the garden is also a highlight."

Staff were skilled at understanding when to interact with children resulting in play being extended. Consistent interactions enabled children to problem solve and make decisions. Staff were attuned to children and highly perceptive with non-verbal cues. As a result, staff were able to contribute to children's play and learning when needed.

Children had opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy naturally throughout the play spaces, experiences and interactions with staff. For example, a patterns activity included discussions around spacing, sequences and colours. The play spaces were enriched with pictures, symbols, signing and words to support children's independence, inclusion and communication skills.

Children were fully empowered to lead their own learning through a strong child led approach. Their interests were noticed and used to provide intriguing experiences which captured their imagination. In addition, individual developmental trackers helped staff to see where they could further progress children's learning. Progress was captured in a variety of ways such as floor books, wall displays and online journals as well as the planning themes and current interests. These were shared to inform parents of progress and so learning could continue at home. A parent said, "We have a rolling assessment programme where after observations we are invited in to discuss our child's learning plans." The team was reflecting on the frequency and content of learning observations, to ensure they are informative of individual children's development.

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.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The new build setting was comfortable, welcoming and homely. The natural lighting and colours, along with the very good use of spaces to offer variety, meant that children were relaxed. Various cosy spaces were available which children used to self regulate, rest and play. For example, children were wrapping themselves in blankets at points, to give themselves some quiet time.

The setting and resources were safe and secure with a fenced garden and secure entry doors. Staff were vigilant about who entered the building and about children's movements around the setting. This further contributed to children's safety. Infection prevention and control measures were in place to minimise the risk of infection spread. Children were familiar with the need for handwashing at key points of the day, suggesting a familiar routine.

Children benefitted from inspiring play spaces which were attractively set up to invite them to explore. For example, the home corner was well resourced with real items such as clocks, food packets and magazines giving an authentic aspect to play. Resources were gender neutral and reflected a variety of cultures and abilities. This made them more accessible to all children and promoted a diverse and inclusive space.

An accessible outdoor garden was shared with primary one children. This supported children's transitions into school and enabled friendships to continue over time. It was a large space offering opportunities to climb, balance and negotiate different terrains. A selection of open-ended materials provided endless opportunities for play. At various points in the year, children grew their own food and used it for snack time. The garden was continuing to develop in response to children's needs and interests.

A stimulating, interesting and spacious environment meant children were busy and highly engaged, exploring, creating and imagining through high quality play.

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 improvements are led well
The nursery was firmly embedded in the whole school community with strong links being forged to jointly take forward a variety of initiatives. For example, children's rights, literacy and diversity. A shared vision for the service resulted in a shared commitment to everyone playing their part in improvement, with all contributions being valued. The high aspirations set by management for staff were reflected in the approach with children. As a result, both staff and children were supported by a positive ethos to reach their potential.

Partnerships with parents had been built and maintained, making staff accessible and approachable to them. Parents had various opportunities to be in the service, such as stay and play sessions, review meetings, sharing skills, curriculum evenings and sports days. Parents did not enter the service during daily drop-offs or pick-ups. The service had been reflecting on this and were planning to change the drop-off and pick-up process in the coming weeks to welcome parents in. This would further enhance partnerships between staff and families. Parents also had opportunities to offer feedback and suggestions for improvement, which contributed to the annual planning for the service.

Quality assurance, including self-evaluation and improvement planning were in place and leading to continuous improvement. A structured approach to assuring quality of provision for children was taken so staff were clear about the role they had in this. A range of processes were in place to ensure a standard of quality was being maintained. For example, each term, personal plans were looked at by senior staff to ensure they were relevant and current, with feedback given to staff. This contributed to consistency across the service.

As a reflective team, they demonstrated a drive for continuous improvement. Staff engaged in a variety of professional learning to enhance their skills to benefit children, as well as using best practice documents for guidance. A book club was an example of how staff were motivated, engaged and inspired to improve and be accountable for their own development. An example of improvement made was the introduction of a slow pedagogy where staff reflected in the moment and responded mindfully to children.

A detailed improvement plan was created using the quality assurance processes and children, parents and staff contributed to it. The plan reflected the current provision and demonstrated an awareness of where aspects could improve. A robust and structured approach to improvement meant that changes could be trialled and evaluated before being embedded. As a result, the service was proactively pushing forward with its own improvement journey.

How good is our staff team? 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 4.3 Staff deployment
Children were cared for by enough staff to meet their needs. This meant that transition points such as lunchtime, could comfortably be covered to ensure children's welfare and safety. It also meant that staff welfare could be considered and planned for, with regular breaks and flexibility where needed. Management clearly understood the need for appropriate staffing to ensure high quality care and experiences for children.

Cluster groups had been formed with a small group of staff for each group of children. These provided key contact points for parents and a structured approach to monitoring progress in children's care and learning needs. This meant that children had continuity of care during staff absence.

Children were cared for by staff with an effective mix of skills, knowledge and experience. The fairly new team had formed into a reflective, motivated and professional group of staff which was skilled at responding to children's needs and wishes. Their collective and consistent approach throughout the day reflected knowledge and commitment to children's rights and trauma-informed practice, with the aim of getting it right for each child. This was demonstrated through an unobtrusive, quiet and calm presence, mindful interactions and involvement in play, and anticipating children's needs based on sound knowledge of them. Parents' comments about staff included, "I feel reassured by the staffs competence, expertise and experience in leaving my child in their safe care. The staff demonstrate competence, professionalism, and calmness while showing tender care and understanding of the children's needs."

Staff communicated effectively and proactively worked together to benefit children. Clear roles and responsibilities provided clarity for staff and ensured all areas of the setting were accessible to children. Staff continually shared information, delegated and directed each other with a shared leadership ethos. In addition, they developed their own interests and expertise to create high quality opportunities for children, such as forest schools sessions and Canaan Lane Cooks sessions.

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	5 - Very Good
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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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