

Downfield Early Years Centre Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
2 June 2023

Service provided by:
Dundee City Council

Service provider number:
SP2003004034

Service no:
CS2003015787

About the service

Downfield Early Years Centre is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 80 children at any one time as follows:

- A maximum of 60 children aged three to those not yet attending primary school.
- A maximum of 27 children aged two - three years of age.

The modern nursery comprises two playrooms for children aged two-three years and children aged three-five years. There are appropriate toilets and nappy changing facilities available.

Both playrooms have direct access to outdoor play areas that have a range of toys, equipment and resources for the children to explore, investigate and have fun with.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 30 May 2023 between 09:00 and 15:00. 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 since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service and 16 of their family;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life;
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy, confident and settled in the nursery. They were having fun as they played and learned with their friends.
- Staff knew children very well and supported them with caring and nurturing approaches, that were consistent throughout the staff team.
- Children were actively and meaningfully leading their own play and learning.
- Staff interacted warmly and respectfully with children, contributing to children feeling secure and valued.
- Staff were flexible and supportive of each other. They worked well together to care for and support children as individuals.

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 happy, settled and having fun in nursery. They were relaxed in the nursery environment and around staff. Children were confident and had ownership of their nursery.

Positive relationships had been developed between staff and children, with strong attachments observed. Staff actively listened to the children, getting down to their level and interacting in a calm and sensitive way, promoting children's self-esteem and confidence.

Staff were caring and nurturing. They knew children very well and were responsive to children's cues and individual needs. Information was gathered for each child within their personal plans to support their individual care and needs. Staff worked with other professionals to support children and families to ensure they received the right support at the right time. Written records of plans, strategies and support ensured there was a shared understanding amongst staff and consistency in approaches for meeting children's needs daily. Management discussed the further development of children's personal plans to ensure more detailed information was gathered to help staff with their care and support of the children.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported throughout their session at nursery. Teddy tummy time had been introduced at the start of the day, to encourage and provide children with time to be calm and self-regulate before they started their day in nursery. A parent told us "My daughter has loved her time at Downfield Nursery. It is nice to know the children have teddy tummy time to relax before their day and get to describe how they are feeling".

Opportunities were available for children to rest and have a sleep if they wished. Younger children took their comforters with them when they went for a lie down, helping them to settle and relax with their familiar object from home. Staff supervised the children well whilst they slept, ensuring they were safe and comfortable.

Lunchtime was a calm, unhurried experience for children in both playrooms. Independence was encouraged with children self-serving their peas and carrots and pouring their drinks. Children who had packed lunches in the 3-5 playroom were asked if they wished to try some of the chicken curry and rice, with some agreeing to try the hot food. Staff sat with the children at the tables, supporting the children as needed and joining in a variety of conversations in the 3-5 room. Children cleared away any leftover food when they had finished lunch and put their glasses and bowls away. The younger children were also encouraged to be independent as they served some of their food themselves. Management discussed the continued development of the lunchtime experience for all children and the further opportunities planned to encourage independence and confidence.

Medication was stored safely and administered after parental consents were gained. Appropriate records were completed with information to support the safe administration of medication to the children. Parents/carers signed the records to confirm they had been informed by staff that the child had medication administered. Monthly audits were carried out to ensure the management of medication followed best

practice and children were kept safe.

Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children were having fun in both playrooms indoors and outside in the gardens. There was laughter and happiness as children were engaged and leading their own play, supported well by staff when needed, and as appropriate.

Resources were easily accessible to children to support choice making and to extend their play. Children moved freely between indoors and outdoors and explored the environments independently and with confidence. Children developed their imaginations, were curious and were supported by staff to develop their interests through their play and learning. There were various activities and experiences children were involved in indoors and outside, for example, a group of two year old children were involved in filling the tub at the top of the stepped water tray. They knew to pull the stopper out to start the water flowing down the steps, with one child using a watering can, to catch the water at the bottom of the steps and pouring it back into the top. A child put the stopper back in to keep the water in the tub at the top until they wanted it to flow again. The children were engaged in this activity for over twenty minutes. The activity encouraged children's problem-solving skills, decision making, while supporting co-operative play. Some of the 3-5 children were watering the plants in the sustainable garden and being supported by staff to be responsible, while learning about nature, growing vegetables and fruit and how these influenced their wellbeing and nutrition. A child told us "I love nursery. I like to play outside with my friends and dancing".

Children were aware of risks during their play. They were climbing, balancing and jumping between loose parts in the garden. We heard staff discuss and encourage children to think about risks and how to play and learn safely throughout the inspection visit.

Staff spoke about being responsive to children's interests and extending these over a number of weeks when appropriate, to continually support children's play and learning. Staff recorded play and learning in floorbooks using photographs, the child's voice and mark making. Children's learning was evaluated, with possible opportunities identified to support children's continued development and progression. The learning journals within both rooms highlighted observations of children's specific learning, which was shared with parents to keep them included and informed of their child's learning and development.

Staff interacted skilfully to support children's exploring and curiosities. Effective questioning encouraged children's understanding, problem solving and critical thinking.

The children were becoming familiar with their local community as they took part in regular trips to the park, nature reserve, the library, and the nearby care home where intergenerational activities took place. They were also learning about the wider community and what was on offer there, for example, with trips to the V&A museum. One parent shared "The nursery is very good at giving the children lots of different and varied experiences outside the nursery setting".

Literacy and numeracy were encouraged and supported throughout the nursery environment and through staff engagement with the children, for example, books were available for children to look at, staff read stories to the children as individuals or in small groups, signage and environmental print was on display indoors and outside. A number line encouraged counting in the 3-5 garden, and a staff member sat with a group of children in the 3-5 garden, skilfully extending and incorporating language and literacy into an activity where they were counting shells and mark making with chalk.

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 school and nursery building were safe and secure with a staff member at both external nursery doors at drop off and collection times, which allowed for a face-to-face handover with parents and the sharing of information and summaries of the children's day. A buzzer system was in operation out with these times so the nursery management knew who was wishing to gain entry.

Risk assessments were in place for all areas of the service, identifying risks and hazards and actions taken to minimise these, to keep children and staff safe and protected. Children carried out their own risk assessments of the play environment at the start of the day, where they identified their own risks, if any. These were discussed with staff if identified, and actions implemented to minimise the risks. Children recorded their risk assessments to show that the nursery environment was safe for play and learning.

The nursery environment was comfortable and welcoming for the children. The playrooms were bright and had good ventilation. The nursery was well maintained throughout and offered children ample space to move around freely indoors and outside. A parent commented "Very friendly and supportive environment for children and parents". Both playrooms had direct access to their own garden space for children to enjoy outdoor activities, active play and have fresh air. These opportunities supported children's health and wellbeing.

The indoor environments had been furnished to a high standard and were safe and secure. The playrooms were well resourced and organised to provide children with easy access to resources, supporting them to make decisions and lead their play, alone or with their friends. We saw children moving resources around the nursery environments indoors and outside to develop their ideas and plans. For example, two children used their imaginations as they took their doll for a walk around the 3-5 playroom, talking of going to the shop. All of the children were independent and confident, having fun choosing where they wanted to play and with what.

The indoor and outdoor environments were developmentally appropriate to support and challenge the children. A wide range of play experiences including playdough, sand, water, loose parts, construction, creative play and open-ended resources supported children to develop their curiosities, imaginations and creativity. Cosy, quiet areas and sensory rooms offered nurturing spaces for supporting wellbeing and resilience whilst also offering space for small groups of children to go for various experiences or one to one activities. Children had free flow access to outdoors where they had opportunities to investigate, be curious and use their imaginations. Staff talked about the continued development of the outdoor spaces to meet the needs of the children attending the service.

Displays of children's learning, artwork and photographs, were displayed around the nursery environment, sharing children's learning with families, providing children with opportunities to revisit their learning and encouraging a homely feel with children's selfies and photographs of the nursery families within the playrooms.

Infection control measures were in place, with the children and staff handwashing regularly. Staff reminded children to wash their hands, for example, before lunch and after toileting and supported them when needed. We discussed the nappy changing procedure with staff and management during the inspection visit to ensure best practice guidance was followed during nappy changing. We saw that nappy changing was a calm and nurturing experience for the child, which supported their self-esteem and wellbeing. The

nappy changing procedure had been updated the following day and a discussion had with the staff team to ensure that best practice guidance was known and followed.

Children's information was stored securely on password protected computer systems and paperwork was contained in lockable filing cabinets in the nursery office.

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 led well

The nursery vision and aims was shared with parents in the nursery handbook, ensuring everyone was familiar with the clear visions, aims and direction of the service.

Quality assurance including self-evaluation and improvement planning was in place. Self evaluation tools were used by management and staff to identify strengths and areas where the service could improve. Key priorities had been identified, such as developing STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) within the nursery, supporting attendance and promoting trauma informed practice. Management and staff talked of a team approach in evaluating the service and reflecting on practice to support the continued development of the service and positive outcomes for children. A detailed quality assurance calendar supported ongoing self-evaluation and quality assurance tasks within the service. Staff spoke positively about their involvement in the evaluation and development of the service and the importance of continuous reflection and improvement for the children and their families.

Staff had ownership of specific areas within the playrooms. They observed children during their play, consulted the children and reflected on the play and learning taking place. Staff discussed and shared with each other their thoughts, ideas and suggestions to extend children's play and learning. Staff supported each other in the continued development of the nursery areas to improve and extend play experiences and environments for the children.

Children, parents and staff were regularly consulted to support the continued development of the service. Mindmaps recorded children's thoughts, ideas and suggestions on various topics within the nursery floorbooks. Parents were encouraged to be involved in the life of the nursery, through supporting and being part of their children's learning in nursery and at home, for example, parents had been invited in for a craft session at Christmas, story sacks had been taken home by the children and enjoyed in various ways, and an individual child's interest in the beauty salon area within nursery had resulted in the pampering of a sibling at home. A parent commented "Opportunities for parents to be involved in craft afternoons have been brilliant. Really enjoyed being in the nursery with my son".

The service ensured parents were kept fully informed of nursery news and children's activities through the Seesaw app and face to face chats with staff. A parent shared "I like how the nursery uses the seesaw app to update the parents on their child's day within the nursery setting. The nursery is very good at giving the children lots of different and varied experiences outside the nursery setting".

Policies and procedures which underpinned the service and supported staff practice were in place. These were reviewed regularly to ensure they remained relevant and continued to follow best practice guidance.

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 4.3 Staff deployment

We observed a confident and knowledgeable staff team who were respectful and supportive of each other. Positive role modelling between staff helped children develop and understand positive and supportive relationships.

Children benefitted from a caring and nurturing team who knew them well. They recognised continuity of care was important for children. Effective use was made of staff experience, skills and knowledge to ensure children's experiences were positive throughout their day at nursery. A parent shared "Leadership team within the nursery setting is excellent, the team appear to work well together and the communication to parents is excellent". While another parent commented "Staff team are always very friendly and helpful and will answer any queries quickly".

Ratios were maintained throughout the day and staff communicated well with each other to maintain the supervision of children both indoors and outdoors. Busier periods of the day including lunch times were well managed to ensure children's experiences were not affected and children continued to be supported and had their needs met. We observed staff going for lunch, this was seamless with communications between staff to ensure all information was known about the children before they left the playroom.

A parent commented "Management are approachable and helpful". The management team supported staff and child ratios when there were unplanned absences, which ensured children were familiar with the adults caring for them and a consistent approach was maintained to support the children.

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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