

Bright Horizons Morton Mains Early Learning and Childcare Day Care of Children

Morton Mains Farm House
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Edinburgh
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
10 August 2023

Service provided by:
Bright Horizons Family Solutions Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2003000319

Service no:
CS2005110275

About the service

Bright Horizons Morton Mains Early Learning and Childcare is situated on the outskirts of Edinburgh within rural surroundings. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 75 children ages birth to five years of whom no more than 30 are under two years.

The service is provided from a large house, babies and toddlers rooms are situated downstairs and the four pre-school rooms are upstairs. All rooms have access to their own gardens.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 07 August 2023 between 9:00 and 17:00 and an announced visit on 08 August between 9:15 and 14:00. 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 15 people using the service
- spoke with five parents and received written feedback from 23 parents
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life and
- reviewed documents relating to children's care and the management of the service.

Key messages

- Children received warm, nurturing interactions from staff
- Children were supported to be independent and learn new skills
- Children had opportunities to learn about their natural environment
- A supportive and pro-active management were in place
- An established staff team worked well together
- The administration of medication forms should be reviewed.

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 nurturing approaches from staff. Staff were gentle and patient in their interactions. Where children required support with personal care interactions were respectful, staff explained what was happening and asked permission from children.

Throughout, the nursery was calm and quiet which allowed children to be engaged in their chosen activity.

Lunch and snack times were calm and unhurried. Children in the pre-school room had opportunities for independence through serving themselves, choosing where they sat and pouring their own water. Children were encouraged to try new skills such as cutting their food. Children in the toddler room should be offered more opportunities for independence as their food was served and drinks poured. Staff in the baby room sat with children when they ate, encouraging and supporting them whilst ensuring their safety.

Sensitive sleep routines were in place and staff spoke about how they balance parents' preferences with what was right for the individual child, for example children were asked if they would like a sleep or a rest if they were tired. Staff had received training from Sleep Scotland and safe sleeping procedures were in place. This promoted good habits around sleeping.

Nursery routines were regular and predictable, whilst allowing for spontaneity, which gave children a sense of security. Staff were aware of the importance of the transition to nursery, between rooms and to school. Children and families were supported to feel comfortable and informed, through settling in visits when they started and meetings with new key workers when they moved rooms. A parent said "Even staff in the other rooms make an effort to know the children so that transitions are smoother".

Personal planning documentation was in place to support individual children. The service had recently introduced FAMLY, an online app, which was used to share information with parents about their child's day and learning and development. This allowed parents to be informed and involved with their child's day at nursery. Some staff were receiving support on writing meaningful observations. There were mixed responses from parents about the use of the FAMLY app, some parents were very positive and some felt that it could be better utilised. Comments included 'Love the nursery app and weekly emails informing parents of updates' and 'We are not fully involved in our child's personal development plan and we think the new Family app could be more fully utilised'. The management team were working to ensure that the rollout of the FAMLY app was meeting the needs of all.

Relevant staff worked consistently and proactively with children, families and other professionals to identify appropriate next steps and strategies based on individual needs and prior learning. Some children had daily diaries which shared information with home which contributed to consistent support. Information was recorded and used consistently to allow children to reach their potential. We discussed with staff how they could streamline their paperwork to support them and the child, as they had lots of information recorded in different places. Staff agreed to review this.

We discussed with staff and management that the recording of children's medication needs should be reviewed. The administration of medication forms should clearly state what action staff should take if the administration of medication did not have the desired effect. This would contribute to the safety of children.

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children in the pre-school room were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning. They were exploring themes of space, pirates and dinosaurs which had come from children's interests. Children were independently making their own creations of video recorders and treasure chests and supporting each other with cutting gluing and Sellotape. This supported children to be confident, creative and expressive. We discussed with staff and management that the breadth of resources should be further developed to ensure children are continuously challenged.

Pre-school children benefited from being involved with the City of Edinburgh Council's transition to primary one where all children were involved in activities relating to the book 'We are going on a bear hunt'. This was explored through various activities such as art, baking and walks in the woods. Visits to primary schools had taken place and staff from schools had been invited to visit the nursery to meet children in their own environment. Children told us about the activities they had taken part in and their visits to their new primary school. This contributed to children being confident about their transitions to school.

Staff were using floor books to allow children to revisit their learning. We discussed that there are a lot of floorbooks and that they should ask the 'so what?' question, what impact is this having on experiences for children.

Children in the Bumblebees room benefitted from inviting spaces. Loose parts, natural materials, as well as sensory and tactile experiences were provided to promote curiosity and creativity. Games had been devised to assist the development of fine motor control and hand to eye co-ordination. Staff supported and interacted with children well, extending language through meaningful conversations and interactions.

Children in the Ladybird room had inviting spaces and resources which provided challenge. For example the 'Bridge walk' which allowed children to develop their gross motor skills and coordination. Children had fun exploring the resources, such as sand and water play which was very popular and allowed them to develop their senses.

Staff were aware of how children learn and offered them opportunities through play. For example offering play opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills in preparation for learning to write.

Children had access to large gardens and opportunities to explore the surrounding countryside. There was a plan in place to improve and enhance the garden. Staff should think about the experiences they offer children outdoors to ensure that they offer the stimulating opportunities and challenge which they offer indoors.

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 was situated in a rural area on the outskirts of Edinburgh, surrounded by fields and with views to the countryside.

The nursery was clean and bright and well decorated. There was good ventilation and windows were open. Children's art work and photos were displayed which demonstrated that children mattered. We discussed with management that some displays are too high up for children to see and they should consider lowering them.

There was ample space for children to play in the nursery, which meant that children could choose to play on their own or with their peers. There was a large garden with access to the local countryside. Younger children went on walks to see the horses, which they excitedly told us about. Children in pre-school took part in forest kindergarten, when they had the opportunity to explore the local woodland. This allowed children to engage with and learn about their natural environment.

We discussed with management that the outdoor areas should be further enhanced to demonstrate children's stages of development and interests. A plan was in place to make improvements to the garden and in the meantime staff should demonstrate the same quality of opportunities for children in the outdoors. This would contribute to children's resilience, health and wellbeing.

A priority on the services improvement plan was engagement with the community, this had come from the Partnership with Parents group. A police officer parent had arranged for a visit from the police as this was an interest from children. The service planned to re-establish relationships with the residential for elderly home which they had before covid-19. This would contribute to children feeling confident in their local community and build new relationships.

Arrangements were in place for the monitoring, maintenance and repair of the setting and equipment. Staff recorded items in a book in the office and they were reported and actioned in a timely manner. This contributed to a safe environment for children.

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 well led

The manager and depute led the service well and had a shared vision for the setting. Children, parents and staff were involved in reviewing the vision and aims of the service which involved everyone's views about what was important for the service. Pre-school children had taken part in a survey asking their thoughts about the nursery. The manager described how they had taken on board the important responses from children, for example friendship and this was being included in the Wellbeing area of the improvement plan. The manager ensured that play and well-being was at the heart of their improvement planning.

There was a 'Partnership with parents group' to ensure that parents views could be voiced. The manager met with them to hear their views and discuss areas for improvement. Recent suggestions from parents had been a focus on wellbeing for children and staff, development of the garden, increased parental engagement and more trips into the community. All of these had been incorporated in the services improvement plan and were being actioned.

The manager understood the importance of involving families within the service and had various events throughout the year to involve parents and grandparents in the life of their child at nursery.

The manager had taken part in the Care Inspectorate's Early Learning and Childcare improvement programme last year. They had identified areas for improvement and learnt to make little changes and use Plan Do Study Act (PDSA), model for improvement, to ensure that positive changes were embedded in practice. Quality assurance was regularly carried out and where necessary action was planned and taken. We discussed with management that they should review the administration of medication forms and the amount of paperwork staff completed.

The managers were leaders and encouraged staff to become leaders within their rooms. We spoke with staff who had been very pro-active at researching best practice, used PDSA to implement changes, had made a vision board and asked for feedback from parents and senior management. They were confident, thoughtful and pro-active. They confidently spoke about the children and how the environment impacted upon them and the positive changes which had been made to improve the environment.

The managers were enthusiastic and positive, they were available throughout the day to support children and staff alike. This was their main focus and resulted in a calm, positive and happy nursery.

Feedback we received from parents was very positive. Some parents raised the issue of infrequent updates on the Family app. We discussed this with management who said that as the App is new there is still some consistency to be embedded and this will be communicated with parents to ensure they know what to expect.

Comments from parents included:

- "Without the hard work of staff and the leadership at Morton Mains it would not be such a caring, inviting setting. Both my children have flourished, gained confidence and independence. I can't thank the nursery enough and I'm very confident we chose the best nursery to meet our children's needs".
- "One or both of my children have been at this nursery for the past 5 years. The management team have been consistent over this time. I have always been able to speak openly and freely with management. Over the past couple of years I have been even more impressed with them. They work tirelessly to ensure staff are kept up to date with changes, put on extra staff appreciation nights, include parents in coffee mornings etc. Partnership with parents group events are always well advertised and they actively seek feedback from parents. This nursery is a little gem and I feel so fortunate that both children have managed to attend it. I believe the managers deserve credit for a building such a strong team".
- "What a fantastic job the leadership do at maintaining happy and valued staff".
- "The leadership is outstanding. The team know the kids, even if not in the rooms. They lead from the front and by example. I see them developing all staff to help them reach their potential and encouraging them too. They have always been very supportive of my family and changes we have faced".
- "Management are visible, approachable and knowledgeable".

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 adequate staff to meet ratios and the needs of children. Staff worked well together to ensure that children benefitted from different opportunities such as being outside, baking and moving between rooms. This was particularly evident in the pre-school room, where the service was provided over four rooms.

Where agency staff were used, the manager tried to ensure continuity of care by having the same agency staff. Appropriate checks were carried out by the manager with the agency, this contributed to the safety of children. The main policies and procedures were discussed so that staff were aware of them. Agency staff were given an introduction to the room and the expectations of them throughout the day.

Staff were well supported by the management team and felt valued. Staff were encouraged to reflect on practice and this was evidenced in staff meetings. Peer on peer reviews had recently been introduced. This allowed staff to support each other to improve as practitioners.

Parent's positive comments demonstrated how staff deployment enabled positive outcomes for children, through continuity of care and meaningful relationships. Comments included:

- "The engagement of the staff with the children and parents is excellent. They really build a relationship with the children and understand their needs".
- "Teachers and leaders are invested in improving and listening. Quality staff that care".
- "Caring staff. Very happy with key workers and feel they really know my child. All the staff have been brilliant though".
- "The staff are very engaged with the children and have a very kind and caring manner with them".
- "The staff are fantastic - the most friendly, caring, enthusiastic set of teachers we could ever hope to have looking after our kids".
- "Most important to us is the staff who support our children. At Morton Mains they go above and beyond".
- "The engagement of the staff with the children and parents is excellent. They really build a relationship with the children and understand their needs".

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To promote and support children's well-being, improvements should be made to the way in which staff record important information about children.

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

This area for improvement was made on 27 November 2019.

Action taken since then

Staff recorded important information about children well. The introduction of the FAMILY app meant that parents could view, comment on and share information quickly with staff. Staff completed lots of paperwork and we discussed with staff and management that they could review the amount of information that they recorded.

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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