

Elmcroft Nursery School Day Care of Children

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Ruchazie
Glasgow
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 September 2023

Service provided by:
Glasgow City Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003390

Service no:
CS2003014878

About the service

Elmcroft Nursery School is provided by Glasgow City Council. The service is registered to provide early education and childcare indoors and outdoors to maximum of 87 children aged from two years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service operates within stand alone premises in Ruchazie in north east Glasgow close to other local amenities such as schools, shops and parks. The service is easily accessible to parents/carers being near to main roads and bus routes.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 19 and 20 September 2023. 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
- received electronic feedback from parents and carers
- received electronic feedback from staff
- received electronic feedback from visiting professionals
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children benefitted from staff who knew them and cared for them in a warm, nurturing and responsive manner.
- Children had vast opportunities to play, learn and explore outdoors in the nursery garden and in the nearby forest.
- Staff were motivated and committed to providing high quality care and experiences for children and families.
- Children, families and staff benefitted from a senior leadership team who were motivated to lead, support and drive improvement.

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were looked after by staff who knew them well and cared about them. In each of the playrooms we observed warm, welcoming staff who were attune to children and their individual requests. Staff were very nurturing and responsive to children. Parents and carers told us that they felt looked after and cared for by the team. We noted over the course of our inspection that the team continued to care for children and families even after they had left the service. One example of this was when we were told about staff who had been going one day a week to the primary school to support a child who was struggling with the transition. The nursery and primary school had worked collaboratively to secure this arrangement and were hopeful that the child's familiar key worker would ease the transition.

We observed children and families being warmly welcomed into the setting. The warm welcome children and families received contributed to their feeling of security. Parents and carers who provided feedback told us;

"My family love Elmcroft, the staff and head are so approachable I am happy and settled leaving my son here each day. He's always running in the door to see what exciting things he's going to do."

"Every single member of staff care so much about the children. The facilities are second to none (play equipment, forest, ability to go on trips regularly) and always kept in great condition. The staff are welcoming and super helpful during drop off/pick up to those also trying to juggle younger children at the same time! We also love how involved we are with our child's learning (through SeeSaw and also parent/child days in the nursery itself)."

The service had implemented a rolling lunchtime experience for children. Children were able to choose when to have their lunch, this meant that children were experiencing a natural end to their play before lunch. Lunchtime was a relaxed, unhurried nurturing and sociable experience. We observed high quality conversations and questioning taking place between staff and children. Children benefitted from being cared for by two consistent support for learning staff during mealtimes. Children were involved in self-serving of meals encouraging responsibility and independence. Support was provided to younger children to meet their individual needs. An effective system was in place to ensure staff monitored and made sure that all children came for lunch.

Children were very well supported by staff who cared for them, knew them well and recognised their needs. Detailed information was recorded in children's personal plans to assist staff in supporting children. Personal plans were regularly reviewed and updated as children's needs changed. Personal plans were enhanced by additional information such as, All about me and all about my language forms. Strategies for children who required additional support were recorded within children's wellbeing assessment and coordinated care plans as well as their what helps me forms.

Children's medicine was clearly labelled and administered safely. Effective, safe procedures were in place to ensure that children's health care plans were reviewed and kept up to date. We discussed with the senior leadership team how they should include more detail to ensure that signs and symptoms and any additional steps which may have to be taken are recorded within medication records. The senior leadership team agreed to do this.

Children were able to sleep or rest whenever they needed to. Sleep time was responsive to children's needs and not nursery routine. Safe sleep practice was followed and children were provided a separate cosy space to rest and relax away from play. Staff were settling and comforting children.

Staff were trained and very clear about their roles about safe guarding and protecting children. Clearly understood policies and procedures were in place which contributed to the health, safety and well being of children who attended the service. Feedback we received from visiting professionals who worked in partnership with the service included , "The staff are extremely child centred and have a clear understanding and knowledge of the child and their personality, traits and likes and dislikes. They also promote positive working relationships with each parent and ensure they are kept up to date with any activities they can attend within the nursery."

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were happy and having fun and engaged in a variety of experiences, often leading their own play and learning. Children had the freedom and choice to move between and access all areas of playrooms and children were using outdoor spaces. Staff were skilful in their interactions. Knowing when to join in and step back to allow children to explore and extend their play. Staff were responsive to children's interests. We observed staff responding to children by facilitating experiences that scaffolded and extended children's learning and thinking. Staff used effective questioning to extend and challenge children's learning and thinking. One parent who provided feedback told us "The setting of the nursery is fantastic, any interest my child or any child has is definitely met, they make sure my child and every other child are able to explore any interests they have daily or weekly and I am comfortable that my child is safe at all times and that staff take pride in what they achieve and where they work."

Play experiences provided opportunities for children to develop their skills in language, literacy and numeracy. Planning approaches were child centred. Staff assessed children's developmental needs and used this knowledge to create learning opportunities. The staff evaluated what difference this has made and we saw how children were supported to make developmental progress.

Staff had designated areas of responsibility for three weeks and planned experiences for children based on their interests. Staff planned for individual key children. Plans were evaluated to show progression and learning and capture where further support was required.

The service had introduced a digital platform using the Seesaw app. Having sampled children's learning journeys on Seesaw , we could see that staff were skilful in their observations and identifying future possible lines of development. Learning journals were very individual to individual children. Some parents who provided feedback told us that they would like to see more updates recorded and shared on the app.

Staff had a very good understanding of child development, relevant theory, and evidence-based practice approaches. Staff were skilfully using this knowledge to support children's play and learning. This meant children benefited from a staff team who used current theory and evidence-based practice to facilitate high quality learning experiences.

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in an environment that was bright, welcoming, and well ventilated. Play spaces were homely and furnished to a high standard. We were however concerned that children could easily access the push bar to the internal door and gain access to a non supervised reception area. The manager accepted our concerns and immediately made attempts to have door security arrangements reviewed. The manager has continued to update us on the progress of this, we are satisfied that appropriate actions will be taken.

There was ample space for children to play independently or in groups. The management and staff team had worked hard to create cosy nurturing environments within the setting where children could relax or chill out. The use of soft lights and soft furnishings throughout the setting contributed to a calming, relaxing environment.

The reception area was well organised to make parents and children feel welcome. Cosy waiting area for parents and visitors to the service. Staff photographs were in the reception area so that parents and carers knew who was caring for children. Key information about the service was displayed to help parents feel well informed and included.

Toys and resources including natural materials were organised to support children's choices. A sensory room where children could enjoy quieter experiences with staff and their peers was available. Staff had made use of the corridor space by setting up interesting provocations that supported children's learning and development. The use of real food items in play experiences supported children's curiosity about their wider world. We observed children confidently moving from area to area within the setting. Children were very confident and relaxed in their nursery environment.

Children had very good opportunities to play and learn outdoors. Children benefitted from a wide range of stimulating resources and activities available to them outdoors in the nursery garden and in the forest. We accompanied some children and families on a visit to the forest where children had opportunities to learn about fire building, nature, and rope swinging. The outdoor environment was safe and secure for children. Children embraced opportunities for risky play and opportunities to be challenged in their play outdoors, whilst being safely supervised by staff. One parent who provided feedback told us, "I feel proud that my son attends this setting. The outdoor environment and access to the forest is amazing, it offers much more than any other setting I considered."

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are well led

Children and families benefitted from a service that was run by a strong and motivated management team consisting of; the manager, depute manager, team leader and lead practitioner of attainment. The senior leadership team were very clear about their individual roles and areas of responsibilities. We received very positive feedback from parents and carers about the management and leadership of the service. Some of their comments included:

"Leadership in the nursery is excellent and senior staff very approachable." and "Management are fantastic and are very approachable and always willing and eager to help I am very confident in their skills."

The manager empowered and enabled staff to be supportive reflective practitioners. Staff told us, and we saw evidence in the service's big book of self-evaluation how staff were involved and consulted about the quality of care they provided. Staff were exposed to best practice documents and were familiar with them and the frameworks used.

All staff we spoke to or received feedback from told us that the senior leadership team were very supportive and encouraging. Some staff described situations when they had been supported and encouraged to take on additional tasks and leadership roles. This highlighted the level of trust and respect that the management team had for staff.

The management and staff team recognised the importance of parental engagement. We saw strong evidence of how the service encouraged and supported families to be involved in the life and work of the setting. Families had the opportunity to get involved in the life and work of the centre through a variety of groups including the forest foraging group, book bug, and stay and play sessions. Children enjoyed seeing their families in their nursery. Involving families in the setting contributed to the service's ethos of involvement, nurture and trust.

Service's vision values and aims reflected the aspirations of children, staff and families. Staff we spoke to told us that they felt empowered and supported to be involved in the service's improvement journey. Staff were aware of the service's overall improvement priorities but also of smaller improvement projects that they were involved in.

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

We received positive feedback from parents and carers about the staff team. All 28 responses that we received strongly agreed or agreed that they felt that there was always enough staff in the setting. Some other comments we received about the staff team included:

- "The staff team seem to work well together, there's a nice atmosphere, you can always see them smiling and laughing with the children."
- "Staff are always willing to help and seem very nurturing. When I collect my daughter from the 2-3 room staff are always on the floor interacting well with the children and greet parents with a big smile."

- "The staff really make Elmcroft what it is. Every single staff member (early learning practitioners/ office staff/cleaning staff) deeply care about the children here and their responsibility to keep them safe. They are engaging and fun and always encouraging independence.

The management team recognised and valued the importance of ensuring the service was always appropriately staffed. Staff deployment worked well to support the needs of the children. The staff team provided a wide range of skills and experience to the service within and across playrooms. They worked very well as a team and staff shared with us how much they learned from each other.

Effective communication between staff ensured children were still provided with the support they needed when staff were engaged in other activities. Careful deployment of consistent support staff during mealtimes meant that children were being supported by and looked after by consistent staff every day. This meant that children were familiar with and felt safe and secure.

Staff breaks were planned to minimise the impact on children whilst enabling staff to rest and be refreshed. Staff told us they had protected time off the playroom floor for planning and observations. This enabled staff to plan for continued support, learning and progression for children.

Key working arrangements ensured there was consistency in individual children's care across the day. When the keyworker was not available, for example, because of annual leave, staff shared with us the service had a buddy system in place whereby another member of staff would take on the role of a keyworker for the period of time ensuring continuity of care and learning for 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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