

# Deans North Nursery Day Care of Children

c/o Deans Community High School  
Eastwood Park  
Deans  
Livingston  
EH54 8PS

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
19 April 2024

**Service provided by:**  
West Lothian Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002601

**Service no:**  
CS2016351551

## About the service

Deans North Nursery is a day care of children service provided by West Lothian Council. The service is situated within Deans Community High School. Children benefit from a a large playroom and multi purpose space with direct access to an outdoor area.

The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 44 children between the ages of 6 weeks to those not yet attending primary school.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 16 April 2024 from 09:00 until 16:45 and Wednesday 17 April 2024 from 08:45 until 15:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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
- Reviewed feedback from seven families
- Spoke with staff and management and reviewed staff feedback
- Observed practice
- Reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children experienced positive interactions that were nurturing and supportive.
- Children had the opportunity to experience and learn in nature through daily woodland walks.
- Staff were committed to their role, ensuring children were supported and cared for.
- Children could independently access indoors and outdoors throughout the day, and make choices about their play.

## 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 evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children with very few areas for improvement.

### Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children benefited from warm nurturing and respectful interactions. Staff offered close affection in the form of cuddles, and expressed care by asking children how they were feeling. This meant that children felt connected and cared for.

Children's wellbeing was supported through effective personal plans that were developed in partnership with parents. We were told by parents "we get updates on how our child has been every day and we go through her plan often with her key worker". A child centred approach to settling new children into the service was done at a pace that was comfortable for each child. Information from parents and home were used to guide staff in supporting children. For example art experiences were available to a child to express feelings and communication during the settling in period. This let the child know that staff were responsive to his interests.

The nurturing ethos and respectful approaches meant that children and families were supported by staff who genuinely cared for them. A parent told us that staff had enabled them to support their child at home by providing books to talk through experiences and feelings. As a result the staff worked in partnership with the parent to ensure the child was effectively supported.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child were included in children's play through 'Getting it Right for Every Child' wellbeing indicators. Each indicator was a playful character that was attractively displayed in the playroom. Most children were confident in their understanding of what each character represented, and were heard speaking about them in their play and conversations. One child said "I'm like safe Sam on the bikes", in reference to following the road markings outdoors when playing on the bikes. This meant that children were aware of their rights and wellbeing through an approach that was meaningful to them.

Effective systems were in place to manage medication. Child healthcare plans were regularly updated to reflect current supports and medical care. Staff had received training and advice on how to care for children with complex needs. This ensured that children were cared for safely and their medical needs were supported in line with current guidance.

Children benefitted from mealtimes that were calm and unhurried, and were familiar with routines, including self service, selecting their seats and tidying up after mealtimes. Children's independence was further supported by allowing them to make choices about the food they ate and how much, with the option to go back for more. Children with packed lunches from home equally served themselves onto plates and had the option to go back to their lunch boxes for additional food. This meant that children felt equally included during mealtime routines. Staff moved around tables during mealtimes which ensured children were supervised when eating however, there were missed opportunities for sustained conversations for some children as staff dipped in and out of conversations. Consideration should be given to how children can be supported to serve themselves with additional food and minimise children using their fingers to select food rather than utensil's that were provided.

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and Learning

Planning approaches were child led, following their interests and supported by seasonal changes. Children's voices were captured within consultative plans and floor books through quotes, comments and photos. For example children were interested in making cupcakes and pizza with play dough. Staff extended their play by introducing a cooker that enabled the children to lead their own play further through revisiting and acting out everyday experiences through play.

A new online system had been introduced to record children's play and learning. Staff were in the process of becoming familiar with the system and had managed to capture meaningful observations that showed children's developmental progress and next steps. Observations aligned with information recorded in personal plans and staff were being supported to develop evaluative language when assessing children. As a result the quality of observations were richer and informed next steps.

Children were engaged in play, either in small groups, with an adult or on their own. For some children their play was sustained over a period of time, including some children who used the block play area for role play. They created a home environment using blocks for beds and blankets and transporting resources as their play progressed, showing their creativity. Play experiences could be enhanced further with the introduction of more loose parts to promote creativity and curiosity. The use of everyday items to create treasure baskets for younger children to explore and older children to revisit was suggested as part of play development.

Literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing had been developed across the service indoors and outdoors through a distributed leadership approach in the team. Approaches and resources had been selected to support children's everyday learning, and through targeted approaches including word boost. Observations and assessments have been used to inform approaches. For example word boost words were adjusted to being changed on a two weekly basis rather than weekly. This allowed children more time to become familiar and confident with new words. As a result learning experiences were being planned and implemented in a way that was meaningful for children.

## How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children with very few areas for improvement.

### Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a setting that was clean, comfortable and inviting. The use of lamps and natural light created a calm space indoors. The entrance area and corridor were attractively presented with informative displays about the service and events in the local community. Parents were able to view their children's experiences through well presented wall displays and floor books that were accessible. This provided a sense of inclusion for children and their families.

Children benefited from indoor and outdoor spaces that were well maintained. Staff had considered how areas were used by children and developed spaces that allowed play to flow. For example, outdoors the placement of boundaries enabled children to freely use wheeled toys on the painted road markings. This enabled children to ride safely at a speed that was comfortable for them. Children were engaged in sustained play indoors and were confident to transport resources around the playroom and to ask for additional resources as part of their play. The use of the multi purpose area provided the opportunity for new resources and experiences to be introduced to children. For example the woodwork bench was being gradually introduced to children with staff support to ensure safety when using real equipment such as hammers and nails. In addition the space was used to deliver groups for children and families, including book bug, yoga and for small group activities.

Waterproof clothing was provided for outdoor play, this enabled children to be outdoors in all weather conditions. There was a spacious area indoors that allowed children to change into outdoor clothes. This meant that there was minimal disruption in the playroom and children could independently dress for outdoor play.

Woodland walks were available daily this enabled all children to experience the local woodlands. Safety briefings for children were shared prior to departing and some children were able to take the lead of sharing the briefings with the group. This meant that children were confident and familiar with the routines and safety awareness when in the woodland area. Children were involved in identifying risks when in the woodlands, staff supported children to think of solutions. For example when there had been heavy rainfall and fallen leaves were slippery to walk on, children found the solution to either walk on drier areas or to walk slower to minimise themselves falling. As a result children were able to manage risks well enabling play in nature to continue.

The multi purpose space was used for mealtimes allowing children to eat and play in separate areas. This meant that all children could have lunch together, with space to move around comfortably and to serve themselves. The direct access to the main playroom allowed children to return to play independently following mealtimes.

**How good is our leadership?****5 - Very Good**

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children with very few areas for improvement.

**Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well**

The shared vision across the service was to create a caring and nurturing environment to empower children, parents and staff. A parent commented that staff "take interest in our home life and always show support". This meant that the shared vision and values were embedded in practice and interactions.

Children were consulted with through daily interactions, being offered choices and having their preferences respected. A child's name was on the display board to go out on the woodland walk. When the child recognised their name they told staff they did not want to go and would like their name removed, which staff responded to. As a result children knew that their opinions and choices mattered and would be respected. We made suggestions to the service on how to enhance children's participation as part of their improvement journey.

Established approaches to family engagement including book bug sessions, woodland walks, yoga and stay and play were regularly available for parents to sign up for. Sessions were planned and delivered with consideration to reduce barriers to parents and children attending. For example stay and play sessions were delivered on different days to provide additional flexibility for families. Stay and play sessions were used to share children's experiences with their families. This included having a yoga session during a stay and play.

Opportunities for families to provide feedback were in place and could be enhanced further. Parents views were gathered through questionnaires, group comment sheets and verbal feedback which was displayed for parents to view. This could be enhanced further to detail the response from the service to the feedback, for example a 'what you said, what we did display' would provide parents with a clear communication of the response and action taken and would strengthen parents views in shaping the service.

Established quality assurance systems were implemented across the service. The leadership team spoke confidently about these and used national and local guidance to inform and support quality assurance and self-evaluation. Staff practice and development was supported through regular meaningful observations and constructive feedback with leaders. As a result staff had the opportunity to reflect and develop practice. There was a shared understanding of the purpose of self-evaluation across the team and improvements were made at a steady pace.

The improvement plan was a shared document used across the team and shared with parents. Staff were responsible for developing aspects of the plan across the year, including literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. As a result staff were invested in the development of the improvement plan and created opportunities and experiences for children.

## How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children with very few areas for improvement.

### Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The deployment of staff across the service was well managed to support children's needs. Staff worked closely with each other to ensure children had access to the full provision across the whole day. Staff absences were managed through additional supply staff that had previous experience in the setting and through a cluster approach. This meant that staff from local settings would be deployed into the setting, to ensure where possible children would be cared for by staff that were familiar to them.

New staff were supported by a mentor as part of their induction, this ensured that they were being supported to know the service, children and expectations about practice. Staff supporting the service during periods of staff absence were also provided with appropriate information to ensure consistency in care and provision for children.

Staff were responsible and took ownership for their own learning. Annual reviews provided an opportunity to reflect and identify continuous professional learning. Staff spoke enthusiastically about their training and development as part of their role in the service. As a result children were being cared for by staff who were committed to the service to provide the best opportunities for children. Staff skills and knowledge were utilised effectively. Management and staff recognised the skills and expertise in each other and viewed the service as a team approach. This demonstrated a motivated team who were committed to developing their practice for the benefit of all.



## 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

It is recommended that the service review how adult-led routines disrupt children's play experiences.

**This is to ensure responsive care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials." (HSCS 1.31)**

This area for improvement was made on 11 June 2018.

#### Action taken since then

A rota had been developed to ensure that all children have the opportunity to participate in the woodland walks. Children were consulted with and had the choice to attend sessions. Woodland walks happened everyday, that enabled children to attend weekly.

Some staff had taken part in Forest kindergarten training, and provided creative approaches to learning outdoors.

The setting was being used by the local authority as an example of good practice for outdoor learning in early years.

The head teacher had been present in the service and had supported and guided the team and service to reflect on children's experiences throughout the day to ensure they were child led.

### Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://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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