

Dalmeny Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

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Dalmeny
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 June 2024

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002576

Service no:
CS2003015844

About the service

Dalmeny Primary School Nursery Class is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children aged 3 years to entry into primary school.

The nursery is situated in a separate building within the grounds of the school. The nursery accommodation comprises of one playroom, kitchen area and toilets, cloak room area with adjacent family room, and changing room. The children also have daily access to a large, well resourced garden area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 18 June 2024 between 9:15 and 16:00. We returned to complete the inspection on Wednesday 19 June 2024 between 9:00 and 13:15. 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 six families
- Spoke with parents, staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents.

We provided feedback to the service on Thursday 20 June 2024.

Key messages

- Children benefitted from a committed team who were passionate about providing high quality care and support.
- Children had good opportunities to develop their curiosity, imagination and problem solving through play experiences.
- Children were cared for in a warm, nurturing environment where they were supported to develop their independence, skills and abilities.
- Children's health and wellbeing was enhanced through daily access to outdoor play.
- An ethos of continuous improvement was evident within the service where quality assurance and improvement was a key focus.
- Staff were flexible and supportive of each other to support and care for 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: Nurture, care, and support

Children were confident, happy, and engaged in their play. They experienced warm, caring, and nurturing approaches from staff who took a genuine interest and chatted with them during play. This helped children feel valued and loved. All parents who completed our online survey, and parents we spoke with during the inspection, told us they were very happy with their child's care. Parent comments included, "It took me a very long time to pick a nursery that I would be happy sending my (child) to, I am delighted with my choice", and "It's a 5 star nursery".

Children's emotional wellbeing and resilience was supported through positive and trusting relationships with staff. They were encouraged to share how they were feeling when they arrived at the service, by use of a feelings board. Staff interactions were unhurried, calm, and responsive. This helped children recognise, understand and express their emotions.

A key strength of the service was its inclusive approach to children's rights. Staff consistently used positive language to promote wellbeing indicators to children, using 'wellbeing buddies' such as Respected Robbie and Included Isabella. These characters were prominently displayed in the playroom, empowering children to confidently share their understanding of their rights, fostering a supportive learning environment.

Children's needs were supported by effective personal plans which ensured staff caring for children had a clear overview of their individual needs and preferences. Strategies were in place to support positive outcomes to ensure children's needs were met, for example, the use of visual timetables and Up, up, and away, a resource tool to support and target literacy. Staff were confident in discussing the strategies in use. This ensured children received the care that was right for them. Regular consultations and reviews with parents had taken place which enabled them to be fully involved in their child's care. Planned events, for example a recent teddy bears picnic, contributed to strengthened relationships, and created strong links between children's home life and nursery.

Mealtimes were a social occasion, and children were encouraged to make independent choices. Life skills were developing with opportunities to self-select and self-serve their meals. Snack and lunch helpers took pride in their roles by helping prepare the tables, filling water and milk jugs and preparing fruits for snack. During snack preparation children could inform the snack menu in the choices they made. For example, we saw the snack helper was keen to chop peppers and cucumber for snack. Staff changed the menu board accordingly. Staff engagement with children at mealtimes supported social interactions and meant they could provide children with help or assistance when needed. Staff were knowledgeable of how to keep children safe and ensured any dietary needs were met.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and Learning

Children benefited from a variety of play and learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors. This meant that they could lead their own play and make choices from a range of experiences.

For example, we saw many children with a keen interest in bugs. Staff were responsive and supported their learning by providing magnifying glasses and bug photo identifiers, this helped children investigate further. Staff used skilful questioning to help extend children's thinking and learning and develop their curiosity and creativity.

Planning approaches were child centred and followed children's interest. There was a balance of intentional promotions and spontaneous learning documented. Floor books were used to capture children's interests, including what they had learned, and what next steps were identified to extend learning further. Staff encouraged children to talk about their learning and what they wanted to know more about. This ensured that targets were meaningful to children and that they would be motivated to achieve.

Staff had developed opportunities for literacy and numeracy within play opportunities, to stimulate children's curiosity. For example, puzzle clocks, number displays, and notebooks and pencils in all areas. Signs and symbols were displayed, including in more than one language. We saw children using mathematical language in their conversations, for example, counting peppers and fruit pieces during snack.

Learning Journals captured significant events observations, progress, achievements, and reflection points. Children could access iPads throughout the day and reflect on their own learning journals. Children were keen to share their journals with us and recall events and experiences recorded. Respectful and trusting relationships with families supported them to be meaningfully engaged in their children's learning. There were a variety of ways families could join in with their children's play and learning. Parents had been invited into the nursery, as part of a culture and heritage project, to talk to children and share their own cultural experiences. This promoted and valued diversity within the life of the nursery.

Children's opportunities were enhanced through very good connections with the wider community. 'Forest fun' sessions were provided in the nearby community woods. These sessions provided freedom to explore and take part in risky play. Children were climbing and building with the natural resources available. We saw children climbing trees and being supported by staff to assess risk and consider how to keep safe.

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

Children benefitted from a welcoming environment which was warm, well-furnished, and comfortable. There was also plenty of natural light and ventilation to support children's wellbeing. Children's safety was maintained by a secure entry system to the building and the garden was fully enclosed. One parent told us "Dalmeny nursery is always a safe and welcoming place, we feel truly lucky to have this service and such kind people there to support us".

The playroom was clean, tidy, and uncluttered. Quiet spaces were available across the playroom and garden to support children's wellbeing. For example, a cosy book corner within the playroom and a 'den' close to the cloakroom. These spaces helped children to relax and self-regulate. Children had access to a range of resources that were well-organised and encouraged exploration and fun. There was ample space for children to extend their learning and interests with their chosen activities. Books and print were spread throughout the play spaces and children were seen exploring these spaces with confidence.

The entrance area displayed photographs and information for parents, and children had access to their own space to store their personal items, which helped promote a sense of belonging.

Free flow access between the indoors and enclosed outdoor space, further supported children's abilities to lead their play and learning. This provided children with healthy opportunities to explore physical play as they wished.

Infection control measures reduced the risk of infection being transmitted with good handwashing facilities for staff and children which were used effectively. Toilet and nappy changing areas were clean, with personal protective equipment (PPE) being stored appropriately. The children's changing area was within the accessible toilet which at times adults were using. We discussed with the service how this should be solely for children's use. This was actioned immediately, and staff and parents were made aware of alternative toilet facilities.

Risk assessments were in place for indoor and outdoor environments which raised staff awareness of potential risks, benefits, and measures to support a safe environment. These were reviewed as changes occurred. This ensured they were current and adapted as needed. These included 'forest fun' sessions and the 'community peacock' who spends much of its day in the school and nursery grounds.

The outdoor area offered a range of natural, loose parts and open-ended material that supported curiosity, creative thinking and problem solving. Children made effective use of this and were confident when using all areas of the outdoor space. For example, developing their ideas through play including building "swimming pools", "bug houses" and making "potions and soup." Children's imaginative play enhanced their play and learning opportunities.

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.

Children benefitted from a culture of continuous improvement. The management team promoted a positive attitude to change and recognised the importance of a shared vision, that was reflective of the needs and aspirations of children and families.

The management team valued staff and were committed to ensuring they were motivated and supported to conduct their roles effectively. Staff expressed that they felt well supported by the management team and appreciated their regular presence within the playroom. Within our survey, staff strongly agreed that their wellbeing needs were recognised and supported by leaders. They also felt fully involved in the self-evaluation of the service.

Regular team meetings enabled staff to receive updates on the service, discuss the needs of individual children and share good practice. As a result, everyone was working together to ensure all children reached their full potential.

The Improvement plan was outcome focused, created with staff to enable a shared vision.

It was informed by self-evaluation, which aspired to high quality care and support tailored to the needs of children and families.

National benchmarking tools such as, 'How good is our early learning and childcare' and 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged childcare', were used to evaluate and monitor practice. We discussed with the management team that peer observations would be a further benefit as part of the nursery improvement journey.

Children and families were meaningfully involved in the service. A display board was set up every day that shared children's learning and interests for the day. This kept families informed of their children's daily activities and interests. This approach ensured all families were able to receive communications in a way that suited them. Parents responding to our survey confirmed that their family had been involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service.

Children and families were supported by a team who were very committed to ongoing improvement. Leadership opportunities across the team promoted leaders at all levels. Staff had 'champion roles' and were responsible for key areas and developments, for example, equity and diversity, outdoor play, and children's rights. By building on existing strengths staff felt supported to further develop their practice and skills. Staff spoke confidently and passionately about these leadership roles and how this had positively impacted outcomes for children, their families, and the wider community.

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 benefitted from a nurturing, caring and dedicated staff team who were warm and responsive in their approach. Staff were very enthusiastic and motivated and our discussions highlighted that they were very passionate about their role. Staff spoke positively about team working and that relationships in the team were strong. One staff member told us "I feel proud to be working in a school where all staff really care for each other and the children".

Parents told us "The staff are always lively friendly and most importantly I trust them implicitly with my child" and "I trust them all with my child they are amazing".

Communication and team working enabled consistent approaches and continuity of care for children. Daily updates provided opportunities for staff to reflect on the experiences and opportunities for play, and plan to extend children's interests and learning. More formal team meetings were held regularly which allowed all staff to feel informed and included in decisions and development areas.

The nursery was appropriately staffed by a very committed staff team. This helped to ensure that every child received high quality care and learning experiences and they were kept safe. Staff were deployed appropriately throughout the day. Busier times of the day, such as staff lunches, did not impact on experiences for children as this was supported by the management team if needed. This ensured children were supervised and were still offered support as needed.

The team were knowledgeable and skilled. They were very motivated and were keen and committed to the continual development of the service. Staff members were supported and encouraged to take on more responsibility and leadership roles, which helped them to develop their knowledge, skills, and confidence. They worked well together to create a positive, caring, and welcoming environment for 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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