

The Edinburgh Academy Nursery Day Care of Children

The Edinburgh Academy Junior School
10 Arboretum Road
Edinburgh
EH3 5PL

Telephone: 01315523690

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
The Court of Directors of The
Edinburgh Academy, an
unincorporated association

Service provider number:
SP2005007897

Service no:
CS2003015842

About the service

The Edinburgh Academy Nursery is part of The Edinburgh Academy Junior School, an independent school. The nursery is registered to provide a service to 90 children aged between two years and entry into primary school. The Edinburgh Academy Junior School campus is situated in a predominantly residential area of Edinburgh. The nursery was purpose built and provides five playrooms, four of which can be opened up to make larger rooms, a large hall area, which is also used for group activities, outdoor play areas for each age group and a garden and growing space to the side of the building, and the 'wild woods' area within the school grounds. The school dining space is used by the nursery for lunchtimes. Children have access to a wide range of facilities within the school, including the gym hall, and library.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 4 June 2024 from 09:00 until 17:00 and Wednesday 5 June 2024 from 09:00 to 17:00. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the 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 48 families
- Spoke with staff and management
- Reviewed feedback from 21 members of staff
- Observed practice
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing, warm and kind interactions from staff.
- Children had access to indoors and outdoors throughout the day, enabling them to make choices in their play.
- Children had access to designated areas for planting and growing and visits to the 'wild woods', allowing them to learn in nature.
- Children benefited from a setting that had clear a clear vision, value and aims
- Staff were committed to their role, ensuring children reach their full potential

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?	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?

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 were happy and confident in the setting. Their wellbeing was nurtured by warm and caring interactions. Children and their families were warmly greeted into the service and this enabled them to feel welcomed and connected to staff. There was a flexible approach to settling in for children who were new, and for those who had attended for a period of time, for example a child was comforted by their parent when they were upset on arrival. The parent was able to spend time playing with their child and were supported to leave as staff continued to care and support. A parent commented that 'staff are kind, nurturing, and take time to form strong bonds with the children'. Similarly a child commented 'teachers are kind and my friends'. As a result children had positive relationships with staff.

Staff knew children well and could talk through their needs, and the strategies used to support them. There was a range of professionals within the school and nursery who supported children, as a result information that would be held within a single personal plan was held in separate recording systems. We signposted and provided the link to the personal planning guidance which the manager stated she was familiar with. Feedback responses from some parents was that they were not involved in their child's personal plan. Some comments included 'I didn't know my child had a personal plan' and 'I haven't really been informed or consulted about my child's personal plan.' Another parent stated 'I feel I am fully engaged in my child's personal plan.' During the inspection feedback, the manager explained that the term personal plans was not used and parents would be more familiar with the term 'all about me'. Personal plans are recorded in a number of different places in accordance with the whole school's processes and are reviewed in partnership with parents and children where appropriate, to ensure children's changing needs are recorded and supported by the service.

Management and staff highlighted improvements were required for mealtimes, and some actions had been taken to work towards children experiencing mealtimes in an environment that was right for them. These included plans for lunches to be delivered to the nursery building and meant that children could stay within their familiar environment.

Children were familiar with the lunchtime routine and the walk from the nursery to the school building. The dining hall was shared with the pupils from the junior school and as a result the hall was noisy and busy with pupils and staff. Most children had an adult sitting at the table with them as a result children were supervised and safe during their meal. Staff feedback noted that this was an improvement as previously staff did not sit with children, they walked around serving and supervising. There were some opportunities for children to develop independence skills including returning their plates after lunch. Some children did experience social conversations with staff as they ate lunch. However there were missed opportunities for children to experience conversations with staff and friends about their day. Some staff missed cues from children, for example a child putting out their hand several times to initiate an interaction but it was unnoticed. The service should consider how interactions and experiences can be improved for children during mealtimes (**see area for improvement 1**)

Children experienced snack time that was unhurried and were consulted with about the types of snacks they would like, this was displayed for children to see. As a result children felt their opinions mattered and were valued. Snack choices were informed by children's preferences. Children with allergies were kept safe during mealtimes with coloured coded mats used to ensure they had the correct meals. Designated staff were in place to serve children with allergies further adding to their safety. However, the snack menu during the inspection was similar in the choices of food available. The alternative sandwich options were not inclusive of dietary requirements, for example children had ham sandwiches and the alternative was dairy free buttered bread. The service was signposted to best practice guidance for menu planning (**see area for improvement 2**).

The service benefitted from a school nurse to manage, audit and support children with medication across the school. We suggested that medication and permission forms could be stored together with each medicine. This would further support staff in responding quickly in the event of an emergency.

A quiet area was available for children who needed to sleep, and room leaders were responsible for the safety of children as they slept. To enhance safe sleeping arrangements the service should consider a monitoring sheet to record checks that have been carried out during the child's sleep time.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children benefitted from the freedom to choose where to play, either indoors or outdoors. The open doors allowed children to move around the space freely and to play in timeframes that suited them.

Outdoors there was a selection of static resources to play on including a climbing frame, swings and trees. Children had the opportunity to navigate and participate in risky play through climbing trees and creating balance beams. Most children were confident to manage their own limitations and asked for help from adults when required.

Sensory experiences were available indoors and outdoors through sand and water, petals and herbs on the play dough provided open ended play experiences. Sensory focussed activities were available in the form of food tasting, sensory bag games and textured painting. Although these were adult directed, staff ensured that all children had the opportunity to experience the activities.

Numeracy and literacy was supported through every day play experiences. Staff used skilful language to promote literacy and numeracy. For example, explaining the purpose of bubble wrap and reflected on the properties of it popping to that of seaweed. The child was able to reflect on their previous experiences and relate to the similarities. A compilation of children's self portrait drawings were displayed in each room and showed the progress that each child had made during their time at nursery. As a result staff, children and parents could easily see the progress and development that had been made.

Children benefitted from a balanced approach to planning. Observations were used to establish children's interests and learning, which was extended through either responsive or intentional experiences. For example a child was interested in the solar system, resources were made available to support their interests this enabled the child to discuss further their knowledge of different planets.

Floor books were used to capture children's learning and experiences, some were enhanced through evaluations made by children. Floor books could be developed further by gathering what children already know and what they would like to find out, children could be supported to evaluate their own learning. This would strengthen the understanding of the impact experiences had on children's learning.

Children were brought together to participate in group activities including sport sessions, French lessons and story time. Children were alerted to this by a gentle ringing of a bell. Most children were familiar with this routine but some children were asked to stop what they were doing to take part. Management should consider how children are supported during transitions and the impact this has on interrupting their play.

Staff were confident to explain and use the online system for recording and sharing with parents children's learning and experiences. Parents were encouraged to share information and learning from home. Detailed observations informed end of term reports and tracking of children's learning.

Areas for improvement

1.
To ensure children experience mealtimes that support their social and emotional wellbeing the provider should review mealtime experiences from a child's perspective, and effectively deploy staff during mealtimes, to ensure positive social interactions are available to children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that 'People have time to support and care for me and to speak with me'(HSCS 3.16).

2. To support children's health and wellbeing the provider should ensure that children are provided with a healthy balanced snack that is inclusive of dietary requirements. This should include but not limited to being informed by current guidance and in consultation with children through menu planning.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that 'I can choose suitable presented healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables, and participate in menu planning' (HSCS1.33).

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

Children benefitted from a service that was clean, comfortable and inviting. The entrance area was attractively presented with children's work and information for parents including staff photographs, information about the service and local community events. This enabled children and families to feel valued and included in the setting and their wider community.

The building was safe with a secure door entry system in place at the main entrance. Parents used the side gates during pick up and drop off times when the children were not outdoors, this was monitored by staff. As a result children were kept safe.

Effective infection prevention control measures were in place, including regular hand washing and cleaning of resources and equipment. This minimised the spread of infection.

Staff role modelled respectful approaches to resources, such as looking after resources and toys. Children were observed returning items after they had been played with, and a child asked to help wash the dishes after snack. This gave children a sense of ownership of their environment and the resources in it.

Children had access to a variety of resources indoors and outdoors, including core resources such as sand, water, paint and playdough. The outdoors provided a large area for physical play with a sloping hill and a large tree allowed children to explore risky play either with wheeled toys or running. This supported children to manage risks and determine their own play boundaries.

In addition, the 'wild woods' area provided children with the opportunity to learn in nature, with access to the green house and planters with vegetables that the children had planted. Learning opportunities could be enhanced further with consideration of staff deployment. The frequency of access could be increased to be more available to children throughout the day.

Care and maintenance of the building was managed by the school with reports being made directly to the property and maintenance department. As a result, most property issues can be actioned quickly. There were property issues identified and raised during the inspection that required improvements. Some of the wood behind the toilets had become worn and wood had become exposed. Several tiles around one of the sink areas in the toilets were missing and the rough wall was visible and in children's reach. As a result exposed wood and walls can harbour germs and increases the risk of the spread of infection. The door that led to a toilet area had been removed to accommodate a nappy changing unit. This was raised during inspection and the manager was signposted to guidance which states that doors should be in place for toilet facilities. Nappy changing areas offered minimal privacy to children as the door leading to the toilet was open and the nappy changing area was visible from the doorway. The manager responded to advice given and actioned promptly, resulting in the door being replaced during the inspection and privacy screens were purchased and in place. As a result children's privacy and dignity during nappy changing was respected.

The exterior fence and garden wall required improvement to ensure children were safe from harm and injury. There was barbed wire fencing erected behind the garden wall by the neighbouring property that put children at the risk of harm. We brought this to the management teams' attention on both days of the inspection, outlining the potential risk to children and a further discussion with the schools health and safety officer. We acknowledged that there had not been any injury or accidents to children from the wired fence. Management should review their quality assurance approaches for daily checks of the garden to ensure that they are effective. We were concerned that the management team did not share the same level of concerns and were asked at the end of the final day of inspection to ensure that the fence was made safe for children. The management team did act upon this and have securely covered the wire fencing. As a result children were safe from injury or accident from the fence.

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 service had a clear vision, values and aims that were underpinned by The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and evident in practice. A staff member commented 'I feel privileged to be part of a team of like-minded people passionate about children development and striving to provide the best quality care for children'.

An improvement plan was in place and used by the team to inform improvements across the service and linked to the schools plan. Improvement areas were discussed as part of team meetings. Staff were aware of the improvement plan and their role and responsibilities within it. Time was allocated at team meetings and in service days to reflect and action the improvement plan and staff felt that their contributions were valued. This supported the shared vision for the service as part of the improvement journey.

A quality assurance calendar was used to direct approaches across the service. Evaluation toolkits provided a framework to inform improvement plans and approaches, including mind maps that were interactive, and gathered contributions from the wider team. This enabled the team to have a shared understanding of self-evaluation to benefit children's experiences and opportunities.

Parents views were sought through questionnaires and informal discussions. Feedback was presented in a 'what you said and what we did' display visible to parents in the corridor. This let parents know that their feedback mattered and was responded to. The parents representatives group provided an opportunity for parents to contribute to the life and work of the service. There were opportunities for parents to support the service informally during celebrations and special events.

Information was shared with parents through regular newsletters and emails along with informal discussions. Feedback gathered from parents was a mixed response about the level of communication provided to them. A parent commented 'There is very little feedback from nursery' and in contrast 'good communication lines with parents'. Management should consider how to reflect and adapt approaches to provided more consistent approach to communicating with parents.

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

Children benefitted from the service being appropriately staffed throughout the session with additional staff being available at busier points across the day, for example at lunch time staff supported children to walk from the nursery to the dining hall within the school. As a result children were safe and supervised by adults.

Absences were managed effectively with the deployment of school and nursery staff providing additional cover. As a result, temporary staff were not required and this ensured that children were cared for by familiar adults.

The leadership team role modelled compassion and were available to staff, children and families throughout each day. As a result, embedding the ethos of the service through daily interactions. Staff were committed to continually reflecting on their practice to help ensure they were getting it right for children. The leadership team managed staff absences sensitively and compassionately. Staff commented, 'Our new head of department is an exceptionally compassionate and empathetic person'.

Inductions and mentoring approaches were in place for new staff, which supported the shared ethos of the service and expectations of practice. As a result practice was consistent across the staff team.

Staff worked together to ensure children had access to the indoors and outdoors across the whole day. Staff told us they felt supported by each other and the management team. Staff were passionate and reflective about their roles and were committed to providing a quality service 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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - 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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