

# Sighthill Early Years Centre Day Care of Children

12 Calder Gardens  
Edinburgh  
EH11 4JD

Telephone: 01314 422 018

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
20 August 2024

**Service provided by:**  
City of Edinburgh Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002576

**Service no:**  
CS2003015455

## About the service

Sighthill Early Years Centre is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 40 children from birth to not yet attending primary school age at any one time. The service is provided by the City of Edinburgh Council.

The service is located in the Sighthill area of Edinburgh, near to shops and local amenities. The accommodation consists of an entrance foyer with an office space, meeting rooms, a staff room and toilet facilities. There was a playroom for children under two years, and two playrooms for children over two years of age. All playrooms had direct access to their own fully enclosed garden space, which provided a variety of outdoor play experiences.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 19 August 2024 between 08:45 and 16:00 and continued on Tuesday 20 August 2024 between 08:30 and 12:15. One inspector carried out the inspection.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection reports, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with children using the service and some of their families
- gained feedback from one family using Microsoft Form questionnaires
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents relating to the care of children and the management of the service.

## Key messages

- Children were happy and confident in the setting.
- Staff were caring and nurturing towards children.
- Children had free flow access to interesting and fun outdoor spaces.
- Good quality resources and play opportunities supported children's curiosity, enquiry and creativity.
- Snack and mealtimes were calm and provided opportunities for children to develop important independence skills.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation procedures were in the early stages and should continue to be further developed.
- The service were keen to involve children and families further in the evaluation and development of the service and this should be progressed.
- The staff team worked well together and supported each other to enable them to provide responsive care for children.

## 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 and caring approaches from staff. Children received cuddles and comfort when needed and staff treated them as individuals by being responsive to their needs. This enabled children to feel respected and safe. One parent told us, 'I am very happy with the service, all of the staff make me and my child feel very welcome. My child always talks about staff at home and at the weekend, so I know they enjoy spending their time here'.

Children benefited from calm and sociable snack and mealtimes. Children had opportunities to develop important independence skills, such as clearing their own plates when they had finished, and pouring their own water. Staff sat with children which provided a role model to encourage positive eating habits and social interactions. This promoted positive relationships between children and staff and resulted in relaxed, unhurried eating experiences for children.

Personal plans supported children's individual care and support needs. The service worked proactively with other agencies to support children's play, learning, and development. For example, they had developed strategies of support for some children with the occupational therapy service. The service should ensure any strategies to support individual children are shared effectively with all staff to ensure consistent practice. These should be regularly monitored and evaluated, so children's progress and development can be identified. This would support children's wellbeing and ensure they are supported individually to achieve their potential.

Positive relationships between children and staff supported children's emotional wellbeing. One parent told us, 'I love seeing the bond my child has with staff'. Nurturing staff provided comfort and reassurance, and they used a variety of resources and strategies to encourage children to express their emotions. For example, there were books and props to support children to name and recognise different emotions. Further reflection on trauma informed practice and developing a deeper understanding of adverse childhood experiences, would further support staff to provide appropriate responsive care to children.

Children's emotional needs were carefully considered and supported through individualised arrangements for sleep routines. Younger children could sleep in cots and older children used wooden pods or sleeping mats. We saw one child sleeping in a wooden pod that was too small for them. To ensure children are comfortable when sleeping, the service should ensure appropriate resources are used.

### Quality Indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

There was a good variety of fun and stimulating resources both indoors and outdoors that supported meaningful play and learning opportunities. Some staff used effective questioning to extend children's thinking, to widen their skills and enhance their learning through play. The staff were keen to further develop play and learning opportunities and introduce more literacy into the environment. The staff team should be supported to reflect on their understanding of child development and relevant theory to further enhance children's play and learning experiences.

Planning approaches were responsive to children's interests. Children had opportunities to lead their own play and could choose how they spent most of their time. We asked the service to be mindful of interrupting children's play through planned group activities. This would support children to engage in deeper, more meaningful play.

Children were being introduced to different cultures as staff were learning words and phrases in Spanish to teach the children. We encouraged them to introduce a variety of languages and resources that represented the children and families in the service. This would further promote diversity and demonstrate their commitment to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment.

## 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 indoor spaces were inviting for children and nicely presented, which supported them to engage in meaningful play. There was a good variety of loose parts both indoors and outdoors which promoted children's curiosity, creativity and imagination. Each playroom had resources appropriate to children's ages and stages of development.

The design of the playrooms supported children's emotional development. Quiet spaces had been created indoors, with soft rugs and cosy cushions for children to rest and relax. These calm areas provided a safe, peaceful space for children, which helped them develop their ability to self-regulate their emotions.

All children had free flow access to secure outdoor play spaces which provided fun play opportunities. There were loose parts, balance beams, and we observed children challenging themselves on the climbing frame. There were apple and plum trees, and children had helped plant strawberry and raspberry bushes. Staff told us children had enjoyed collecting fruit from the garden to use in their baking. This provided opportunities for children to develop their self-esteem by having a sense of responsibility. We asked staff to ensure fruit collected from the garden was washed appropriately before eating, to ensure it is clean and safe to eat.

The setting was safe and secure for children and staff. There was a clear process in place for children and families arriving in the setting. Staff deployed themselves effectively to ensure gates and doors were appropriately secured.

There were some risk assessments that had been completed that promoted aspects of children's safety. We asked for some risk assessments to be further developed to support consistent practice. For example, there was a checklist used when monitoring the garden before use, which prompted staff to check the fences, play resources and exterior building. We found pots used in the outdoor music area had collected standing water, which had the potential to gather bacteria. Resources should be more thoroughly checked and staff should be supported to understand potential risks. Risk assessments for individual rooms should be reviewed and streamlined to ensure they support staff to understand risks and mitigate against them. This would further promote a safe environment for children, families and staff.

## 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 led well

The management team and staff were dedicated and committed to the service. They engaged well during the inspection process and were keen to share with us the areas for improvement they had identified. There had been recent changes in the management team, and the new manager was keen to promote a shared vision for the setting. There were plans to review the service vision, values, and aims to ensure they reflected the needs, wishes and choices of children and their families. This would help all staff to understand what was important for the setting and work together towards a common goal.

Families told us they had developed positive relationships with staff and that they felt informed about their children's experiences when in the service. Parents were warmly welcomed into the playrooms at drop off and collection times. One parent commented, 'The staff are always there for parents as well as the children'. There should now be opportunities for children and families views to be gathered and used to inform development of the setting. This would ensure children and families feel included, valued, and respected.

There was an improvement plan in place which identified the key priorities for the service. The management team had started staff consultations to increase their involvement with the improvements planned. Staff were keen to share their ideas and contribute towards the service improvement. There were plans to introduce staff working groups linked to the improvement priorities, to encourage professional discussion and reflection. The service should move forward with this, to benefit from the experience and knowledge of the whole staff team. This would enhance children's experiences and opportunities and demonstrate the service's commitment to developing a shared responsibility towards continuous improvement.

There were policies and procedures in place to support consistent practice and understanding. The management team were reviewing these to identify areas for further improvement. For example, there was a new procedure being introduced for monitoring children's absences. There was a clear process to identify staff's responsibilities and the new process was shared with family's using their online communication platform. This enabled parents to know what to expect from the new process and promoted the safety and wellbeing of children.

Due to changes in the management team, some quality assurance processes had not been kept up to date. There was a quality assurance calendar, but this needed to be further developed to ensure it supported effective monitoring of procedures and practice. For example, monitoring of medication needed to be further developed to ensure it provided an overview of all medication kept in the service. Formal monitoring of practice should be planned for and introduced, as well as evaluating aspects of quality, such as children's experiences, and the learning environment. This would allow managers and staff to recognise agreed standards and expectations, and identify suitable approaches to improvement.

Some self-evaluation had taken place to enable staff to reflect on the service and identify strengths and areas for development. For example, staff had reflected on how they support children's rights during daily routines. They had linked areas of practice to articles from the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) and indicators from the Health and Social Care Standards. This demonstrates the service's commitment to provide better outcomes and ensure children are treated with respect and dignity.

To support the service to continue their self-evaluation journey, we signposted them to the Care Inspectorate publication 'Self-evaluation for improvement - your guide'.

## 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

All staff took an active approach towards the inspection. They worked well to create a positive atmosphere and welcomed children and families into the service.

Staff communicated respectfully with one another and worked well as a team to be flexible throughout the day. For example, they offered each other help at key times of day, and ensured there was effective supervision in each of the play spaces. This ensured children's needs were met.

The service were reviewing their process for completing staff appraisals. The manager was keen to identify staff's strengths and developmental needs and ensure staff had an opportunity to receive support towards their professional development plans. We discussed ways appraisals could be supported by introducing monitoring of practice and identifying clearer action points for development. This would allow the management team to monitor children's experiences through interactions with staff, to ensure they were supported in their role and their strengths recognised. The manager should work with staff individually to identify how they can be supported, and recognised for their accomplishments. Staff are ready to manage greater responsibility to ensure they have a sense of achievement within their role. This would ensure they are motivated to be part of the service's commitment to continuous development and allow children to benefit from a stable staff team.

An induction programme was in place to allow staff to familiarise themselves with policies and procedures in the service. The manager had plans to review the procedure and use the ELC National Induction Resource. Creating a more formal induction and mentoring support for staff, would guide and enhance staff's understanding of their roles and responsibilities of being registered workers. This would support staff to continue to further develop their skills for ensuring positive outcomes 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](http://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



## To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

## Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.