

# Davidson's Mains Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

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Edinburgh  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
23 August 2024

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

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002576

**Service no:**  
CS2003017021

## About the service

Davidson's Mains Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 78 children at any one time, aged between 2 years and primary school entry, of whom no more than 20 children are under the age of 3. An additional 2 children over the age of 3 may be cared for when the outdoor space is used consistently as agreed in the variation dated 8 November 2017.

The nursery is located in a purpose built building consisting of one large playroom and one smaller playroom. Both playrooms have direct access to the large enclosed garden and make use of the school grounds including the woodland area. The service is within easy access to the local amenities such as shops, library, woodland area and parks.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection visit which took place on 21 and 22 August 2024. 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 17 families
- Reviewed feedback from staff
- Spoke with staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents.

We provided feedback to the service on Friday 23 August 2024.

## Key messages

- Children were settled, happy and engaged in play.
- Staff were warm and nurturing and responsive to children's cues.
- Children benefitted from relaxed, unhurried mealtimes that supported their independence and communication skills.
- Daily access to fresh air and outdoor experiences supported children's health and wellbeing.
- Planning and observation cycles should be further developed, to ensure high quality outcomes for children.
- Quality assurance systems should continue to be developed, to ensure they are robust and effective, to maintain a safe environment to influence ongoing improvements.

## 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 were happy and relaxed as they explored their environment. Staff provided comfort and warmth to children in a gentle and sensitive manner. This helped them feel safe and secure. Parents all agreed with the statement 'Overall, I am happy with the care and support my child receives in this service' and comments included, "Staff are welcoming, friendly, attentive and always happy to help" and "All the staff are approachable and really encouraging towards our child's ongoing development needs".

Staff were kind and caring in their interactions when supporting children with personal care. Children's permission was sought before personal care was carried out. This meant that children's privacy was respected, and their play was not disrupted whilst ensuring their care needs were met.

Key information was gathered in partnership with families and was used effectively to help staff provide individualised care. Staff were knowledgeable about each child's needs and strategies in place to support them. Personal plans were in place however, identified information held was not easily accessible to staff within the playrooms. Senior staff had started to make changes to how information was gathered and it's accessibility. This would mean staff would have access to the correct information, which was current and relevant and ensure a holistic view of children's needs were captured.

Mealtimes were a social occasion, and children were encouraged to make independent choices. Children experienced a snack time that was unhurried and children were consulted about the types of snacks they would like. Daily menus were displayed and staff were knowledgeable of how to keep children safe, and ensured any dietary needs were met. Staff engagement with children at mealtimes supported social interactions and meant they could provide children with help or assistance when needed. Lunchtime in the Meadows playroom had recently changed to a rolling lunch. This meant minimal disruption within the playroom and children could make the choice of when to eat and when to play.

Staff spoke confidently about their role in safeguarding and protecting children. They knew how they would record and report any concerns. Regular safeguarding training helped keep staff up to date and be confident in their roles.

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were settled and engaged in play. They could follow their own interests as they explored their environment between indoor and outdoor spaces. Staff showed enthusiasm in their interactions with children, providing resources and experiences to support their learning. Parents told us "All the staff are approachable and really encouraging towards our child's ongoing development needs".

We saw children take part in and enjoy a range of activities, including role play, constructive play, arts and crafts and water play. These supported children to extend their imagination and learning in their play experiences.

A new woodwork bench had been introduced and children were observed with staff having an induction of available tools and safety rules of the area. This helped children be aware of risk and help manage their own safety.

Children were happy playing outside, having fun and developing skills, sharing, and negotiating with each other. They were actively leading their own play and learning, engaged with resources which supported their interests, for example building bridges, balancing games and 'shopping'. The service should continue to develop resources to ensure there is a range of natural materials available. This would provide further opportunities of challenge, creativity and curiosity.

Children were supported to develop their language and numeracy skills through play opportunities, storytelling, conversations with staff and routines of the day. For example children counted each other at the snack table and could identify numbers of available spaces. Staff told us that language and numeracy was an identified area of improvement with a focus on the outdoors to help enrich children's learning.

Staff were beginning to use a new responsive planning approach, which linked to national curriculums such as the Curriculum for Excellence and Realising the Ambition. We found staff required further support to fully understand and embed the planning approach. When fully embedded staff told us children would be involved in a more meaningful way to promote their learning and development (see area of improvement 1).

Learning journals were in place for children. These contained observations and photographs demonstrating learning experiences which captured achievements and progress. These should be further developed to improve the quality and regularity of observations to capture learning. Parents gave positive responses to the use of the learning journals, however some parents told us they would like to see more regular updates of children's experiences.

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children are supported to achieve the best possible outcomes, staff should continue to build knowledge of the planning approach, assess progress and develop quality observations.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

## 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 warm and welcoming environment. It was well furnished and comfortable, and spaces allowed for a range of active, focussed, and quiet play areas. There was plenty of natural light and ventilation to support children's wellbeing. The entrance area was a welcoming space to meet parents and there was a range of information available. Parents told us "It's a nice environment and my child has the freedom to play where they want".

Children's health and wellbeing was promoted as effective infection prevention control measures were in place. Most children were observed washing their hands when coming indoors after outdoor play and before mealtimes. Although, staff reminded children to do this throughout the day, staff should continue to monitor handwashing routines to ensure this was consistently and effectively being carried out. For example, in the Meadows children's playroom there were two entrances to the toilet area, making it more difficult for staff to monitor. We discussed this with the senior team and action was taken. On the second day of inspection only one entrance was available to the toilet area. This meant more privacy for children, staff could monitor the area more easily and this helped reduce the potential spread of infection.

The layout of the setting enabled children to have free flow access between the indoor and outdoor spaces. This supported children to lead their own play and learning. Core provision provided for children's interests and children were seen to enjoy art and craft areas, water, cars, dolls and dough. Play spaces reflected children's interests and preferences, and staff supported children during play. Children enjoyed access to the outside play space where they could explore physical and messy play activities further. All core provision was available however, further provocation and resources in some areas would be of benefit, for example, in the mud kitchen to extend opportunities of imagination and curiosity.

The nursery had appropriate security measures in place, such as a secure entrance, locked doors and gates. However, we found that ropes that had been attached to a now removed water barrel were still tied to the fence. We also found a pallet close to the perimeter fence that could be a means of climbing over. Both were potential risks. Senior staff took immediate action and removed the ropes from the fence and pallet from against the perimeter fence. We asked that daily risk assessments be reviewed to ensure robust systems were in place, to support the safeguarding of children's environments (see area of improvement 1).

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children experience high quality outdoor facilities and are able to play and learn in a safe environment that meets their needs and choices, the provider must ensure the premises are safe and well maintained.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well- maintained premises, furnishings and equipment'. (HSCS 5.22)

## 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

Throughout the inspection, the senior team and staff responded well, taking on advice and encouragement when suggestions were made. Staff told us they felt valued and supported by the senior team and were committed to the development of the service. Parents overall, were very positive about the staff team and the care of their children. One parent commented, "A huge thank you to all the staff for everything they do, we appreciate what they do for our young children starting out on their learning journey".

The service had developed an improvement plan, identifying key priorities to support improvement. These included reflection of curriculum rationale, reframing the approach to planning and to promote leadership at all levels. Staff had a good knowledge of these priorities and we could see in practice how improvements were being made. For example, the introduction of slow pedagogy, which focusses on the 'present moment' and being attentive to children's pace.

A monitoring calendar identified quality assurance and self-evaluation processes, however these were at the early stages of development. For example, personal plans, planning and learning journals. We would encourage the senior team to continue to develop systems to ensure that any improvements are sustained and that they continue to make progress in developing the service. This would help support positive outcomes for children and families.

Children and families experienced a warm, welcoming, and inclusive ethos. Staff promoted the vision, values, and aims of the service through their practice and experiences offered. Parents were welcomed into the service at drop off and collection of their child. This gave parents regular opportunities to speak with staff which helped develop relationships and communication. Staff told us they were keen to further support ongoing ways of engagement with families and continue to strengthen relationships.

### 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

Staff worked well together, to create a positive and welcoming environment. They were kind, caring and nurturing in their interactions. This helped to create a positive atmosphere for both staff and children. Parents told us, "The staff are fantastic and very helpful and friendly" and "Very professional and feel my child is being very well looked after".

Staff told us that lots of changes within the senior staff had been challenging in recent months. However, they felt positive and enthusiastic about building relationships in moving forward. One comment we received stated "it's a really great team which makes a lovely working environment".

The nursery was appropriately staffed, and staff were suitably deployed throughout the day to meet children's needs. We observed staff communicating well when they were leaving designated areas in response to children's interests. For example, a child who had recently started at the nursery wanted the support of their keyworker to access the outdoor area. Staff were flexible in moving areas to support the smooth running of the nursery and being responsive to individual children. The senior team effectively supported staff by spending regular time on the nursery floor. This helped to build positive working relationships and allowed time for professional discussion.

The service had an effective approach to staff training and meetings. These gave staff opportunities to reflect on priorities and plan for ongoing improvements. Staff had completed mandatory training of child protection, food safety and first aid. They were also encouraged to build further skills and knowledge in areas of individual interests, these had included outdoor play and forest kindergarten training.

## 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

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