

Greendykes Early Years Centre Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

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City of Edinburgh Council

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About the service

Greendykes Early Years Centre is a City of Edinburgh Council provision offering care and education to children from birth to entry into primary school. The service can accommodate a maximum of 85 children at any one time.

The service is situated in the south-east side of Edinburgh close to local amenities with good bus links to other parts of the city.

The premises consist of five playrooms catering for different ages and stages of development. Toilet and nappy changing facilities are adjacent to playrooms. There are two dining spaces for older children, while younger children eat their meals within their playrooms. Two gardens at either side of the building are enclosed and can be accessed from the playrooms. There is a large reception area to welcome families into the service. There is a small library and a sensory room in a separate building, which can be accessed through a small courtyard beside the nursery offices.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on site on Tuesday 29 October 2024 from 09:30 to 18:00 and on Wednesday 30 October 2024 from 09:25 to 18:15 with additional information gathered remotely after.

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

We gave feedback to the service on Monday 4 November to ensure that all leaders who wanted to attend could be there.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with 14 children using the service and gathered feedback from 12 of their families
- spoke with six staff and gathered feedback from 21 staff through our electronic surveys.
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

Children experienced warm and nurturing relationships with staff who knew them well.

Children enjoyed play experiences in and outdoors and had opportunities to visit resources in their local community helping them to build new skills and learn to respect nature.

The service identified that children's mealtime experiences needed to be further developed to ensure that these are positive sociable experiences for all children.

Children enjoyed a variety of play opportunities which supported them to learn and develop. More could be done to ensure that all areas are inviting and inspire curiosity for children to support them to learn new skills.

Children were safe in the service, however, staff could continue to develop how they involve children in assessing risks to help them build skills to keep themselves safe.

The service has a clear vision for how they plan to improve and this is shared with families. They could further develop their quality assurance systems to show how they will monitor and progress the improvements they have identified.

Staff had positive relationships with children and families. The service could further develop how they are deployed to ensure reduced disruptions to children's play and support them to have consistently positive experiences.

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 nurturing relationships with staff who who knew them well. Where children needed support and personal care the staff mostly supported them with kindness and respect. Parents told us that they had positive relationships with the staff team. One commented "The staff are brilliant always friendly and happy to help when they can." Another commented that their child "loves the staff and is always talking about them and how they've helped him throughout the day". There were some missed opportunities for staff to be as supportive at busier times of the day and when helping children to make decisions about their behaviours. Some staff spoke about understanding that all behaviour is communication and they were working on responding sensitively to this. The service should continue to review staff practice to ensure that it is consistently promoting children's sense of wellbeing.

Children were consulted about some aspects of their day, however more could be done to ensure that they are making choices and being respected as the expert in their own needs. Children's play was often interrupted by adult led tasks through their day, for example for gather times, nappy changing, room moves and set lunch times. The service should review how their adult led tasks and routines impact on children and try to minimise their disruptions to support children's engagement in play.

We saw children building friendships with their peers and being given support and language to set boundaries with them when they were not enjoying things. This was helping to empower them. One parent commented "He really enjoys the variety of activities daily. He enjoys the garden and has a great group of friends in his room that he likes to play with". The sharing of garden spaces helped the children to build relationships with children from different age groups and staff in other rooms. This helped to make transitions in the service easier for children. We also saw an example of an older sibling being able to help their younger sibling settle well in the service through play in the garden.

During snack and meal times children were encouraged to pour their own drinks. At other times there were missed opportunities for children to be encouraged to drink and stay hydrated. Staff showed us their displays with 'signifiers' of cups in their rooms which children could use to let them know they were thirsty. We spoke about ways the service could support children to stay hydrated where they were not yet using the 'signifiers'.

Mealtimes were generally safe and children were supported to be independent, learning how to serve their own food and helping to tidy up after meals. For younger children these were relaxed sociable experiences. The service told us they were reviewing the meal times to support all children to have positive meal time experiences. Consideration should be given to making mealtimes more flexible empowering children to access these in a way which meets their needs. More could be done to ensure that lunches provided give children positive mealtimes, developing a taste for nutritious foods. One family commented that the nursery could benefit from a "better variety of lunches. (my child) comes out of nursery very hungry as he hasn't eaten much or any lunch." another commented "I feel the lunches offered could primarily be healthier".

Some children found space to rest and relax during their day. Staff supported this responsively in their rooms, with children napping in alcoves on sleep mats. For some children opportunities to support this were missed. The service told us they were reviewing how they offered sleeps for children to ensure that this was a positive experience in line with current best practice guidance, helping to keep children safe and healthy.

Where children had identified needs we saw that personal planning was supporting staff to meet their needs well. Each room had booklets for supporting some individuals to help all staff provide consistent strategies of support. We spoke about considering these booklets for all children helping staff have quick easy read guidance about supporting children's individual needs. We saw that staff met with families regularly to discuss children's needs, however, information in their personal plans did not always reflect significant changes which had happened. This should be considered when planning meetings to ensure that staff are confident about where to update information to help support children effectively.

Medication was stored well and staff had good plans for how to keep emergency medication to hand, for example when a child moves room for the afternoon session. However, reviews should happen more frequently to ensure that information is accurate and that it is clear when to administer medication, for example giving signs and symptoms to look out for to administer emergency medication.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Most children had periods of prolonged play during their day. Children chose to play together or by themselves. Children were at times able to decide if they wanted to play inside or out and which garden to play in. However, play and learning was often disrupted by routines of the day. More could be done to ensure that children can lead their own learning throughout their time at nursery. For example by ensuring that core resources and garden spaces are always available and children can choose when to stop and eat or join in songs or group activities.

We saw some hand signing being used across the nursery, helping to support effective communication. This was not consistent however, so could be built on to support all children's understanding and help them to make choices.

Some staff supported children to develop problem solving and decision making skills through effective questioning. However, there were missed opportunities at times to extend children's thinking skills, particularly when dealing with risks. The service should continue to develop staff skills in building children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Consideration should be given to exploring potential hazards and discussing potential outcomes to help children develop their own ability to assess risks and stay safe.

Staff had considered how to support children's literacy and numeracy through their practice and resources in the setting. For example using visuals, 'signifiers', written words, and by narrating children's experiences and singing to extend their vocabulary. Children were supported to count, sequence, compare, predict, recall and describe. More could be done to support this in the outdoor areas for children who prefer to play outside. Staff told us this had been identified in their reviews of the garden space.

Staff knowledge of child development and relevant best practice guidance had helped them to plan learning experiences for children, using their interests and their developmental stages. In some areas more could be done to plan the resources to build children's skills in a targeted way, for example in the outdoor area.

Records of what children were achieving were regularly updated and shared with parents online. Parents told us they felt welcomed into the service and were updated about their child's development regularly. One said there are "always stay and play sessions and you can stay on in the room for a while if you like to see

what is happening, plus there's always newsletters and their journal is updated often". The service should continue to develop the quality of the information shared about children's progress to ensure that this is always about significant learning for the child. This will ensure progress can be monitored and next steps in learning can be planned.

The service were making use of the local community to extend the experiences on offer to children. This included visits to the library, local shops and recently they had reintroduced forest walks. This helped children to learn about their local area, build new skills and develop a respect for nature.

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 comfortable environment which had lots of natural light, good ventilation and direct access to garden spaces. Each room celebrated children's efforts with attractive displays of their work. Children had space to store their belongings including comforters and knew where to access them. This helped them to feel safe. Family photos were displayed in rooms, building links between home and the service and helping to comfort children.

Each room had low furniture so children could easily access resources. In some areas the rooms and resources looked tired and some were in need of deep cleaning and maintenance. We shared these with the service who said they would take action to address the issues to help children feel valued.

Children were safe in the setting. Staff were vigilant to risks and carried out head counting regularly. Staff could continue to develop how they include children in assessing risks to help them to learn new skills to keep safe.

Families told us their children enjoyed a variety of play opportunities at the nursery for example "Planting seeds in the garden washing baby in the bath baking cakes" or "Messy play trays, baking, dough making, outdoor play , indoor play , walks to local parks or shops". When asked what would make the nursery better some said that they could do with more toys, resources and activities.

Outdoor areas offered children opportunities to explore different terrains, swing, balance, climb and develop their physical skills. Children could usually choose to play in or outdoors helping them to lead their own learning. At times children were not able to access these spaces due to staffing levels or tasks. Staff should continue to monitor access to these spaces to give children freedom to move and stay healthy.

Children were familiar with good handwashing routines and staff supported them to do this well. In some rooms sinks were not suitable for the age of the children. We suggested ways the service could better facilitate this helping children to learn good hygiene routines. Staff followed good hygiene routines to support children to stay healthy, for example cleaning tables for mealtimes and keeping floors hazard free. Consideration could be given to deep cleaning areas and resources to ensure that these are clean and attractive for children's play.

Staff spoke about limitations of the building and how the spaces could be managed. Staff should continue to develop audits of their environment which focus on children's experiences to support them to address these issues.

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

Families were routinely consulted by the service helping them to feel included in evaluating and developing it. Opportunities to spend time in the service were well planned to support all families to engage in these. The service additionally supported activities like swimming for families with staff support to build confidence and help children and families learn new skills. One families told us "the staff at the nursery encouraged engagement and were always willing to talk".

Children were listened to by staff who cared about their view. At times children were encouraged to give feedback about their day, for example giving a thumbs up or down for lunch. Some staff used signing to support effective communication with children. Further developing this will support them to ensure that all children can share their views in the service.

Staff were involved in all stages of evaluating and planning for the service. Staff were familiar with the priorities for the service and could explain their role in developing them. There were regular opportunities for staff to discuss practice, and the aims of the service, to support their ongoing development. Records showed that children's needs were central to the discussions. The service had established roles for champions in key areas of development and this helped to develop their knowledge and skills.

Staff used best practice to reflect on their practice to provide positive experiences for children and to help them improve. Senior staff told us they audited practice and the room environments and told staff about improvements which could be made. We directed the service to further guidance to support them to document these audits and reflections to help them to ensure that they action any improvements identified. We discussed how the service could identify ways of measuring whether their actions had been successful for example.

The informal quality assurance processes had identified some of the improvements we discussed during this inspection. Documenting these would help staff to see when they had improved children's experiences, for example during mealtimes or in the outdoor areas. Quality assurance processes and improvement work should be further developed to ensure that gaps in practice or performance are identified to support the service to address these. For example we discussed using overview audits of areas like accident records to ensure that patterns can be identified and addressed to keep children safe.

We discussed when the service should notify the Care Inspectorate about significant incidents, accidents and Child Protection concerns in line with their regulatory responsibilities. Senior staff were confident they now knew when to notify the regulator of such things.

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

The low numbers of children in the baby room allowed staff to provide periods of one to one support, helping babies to build strong attachments to staff. There were still times during the day when adult led tasks disrupted the babies play experiences, for example, preparation for meal times and nappy changing.

We saw that across the nursery there were enough staff to keep children safe and support them in their play experiences. There were busier times of the day when children had their play disrupted by adult tasks. For example, meal and gather times and moving room to allow lower numbers of staff to work together during the afternoon session. There were also times when the high level of need in the rooms meant that there were missed opportunities for quality engagement which would support children's learning and development. The deployment of staff should be reviewed at these times to ensure that disruptions to play are minimised. This will allow children to lead their own learning and staff to support children's individual needs positively throughout their day. Consideration should be given to promoting free-flow access where children are respected as experts in their own needs, for example, when they would like to access snacks and meals or the garden.

In the afternoon some younger children had their play disrupted when they were taken to a different room. This was to support staffing levels dropping as shifts ended. There were some benefits to this practice with children building relationships with staff and children from other rooms. However, consideration should be given to how children accessing afternoon sessions experiences differ from the children who attend for morning sessions. The service should ensure that this is managed as positively as possible, for example minimising the disruption to children's play.

Displays shared photos of the staff working in the rooms on a regular basis. Families knew which staff would be caring for their child each day. This helped to build good relationships with them. More could be done to share when temporary or cover staff are working in rooms to further support this.

Staff were supported to enhance knowledge and skills where gaps were identified in knowledge or practice. Absences were well planned for to ensure that vacancies were covered effectively. Absences had however, impacted on staff mentoring and development opportunities at times. The service should continue to monitor how this impacts on their ability to support staff development and improve outcomes for children.

New staff were inducted into their roles, to support them to be familiar with the expectations of their role and to get to know the children well. We saw that the service were using the national induction resources well to support this. Staff told us they were mentored well by other staff and this had built their confidence.

The majority of staff told us that the leadership team were supportive and helpful, helping them feel valued. One commented "My leaders are very supportive and helpful. They listen well, they make sure that I am happy and motivated".

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	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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