

# Cargilfield Nursery School Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
20 January 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Cargilfield School

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003571

**Service no:**  
CS2003016185

## About the service

Cargilfield Nursery School is registered to provide a daycare of children service to a maximum of 50 children. All children shall be between three and five years of age. Full daycare of children can be provided. The service provider is Cargilfield School.

Cargilfield Nursery School is part of Cargilfield School for boys and girls aged three to thirteen years of age. The service is situated on the west side of Edinburgh within easy travelling distance of the city centre and main transport links. The nursery is based in a purpose-built building on the campus across from the main school. It provides spacious classrooms for the nursery through to primary three. The service operates Monday to Friday offering morning and full day places, along with activity and after school clubs during school terms.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 15 January 2025 between the hours of 09:20 and 15:45. We returned to complete the inspection on Thursday 16 January 2025 between the hours of 09:10 and 16:20. 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 the previous inspection report, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since registration.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke to and interacted with children using the service
- spoke with the staff and manager
- observed practice, daily routines and children's experiences
- reviewed documents in the service relating to children's care, play and learning
- took into account online feedback we received from 12 families.

We provided feedback to the manager, the school head teacher and the nursery lead by videocall on Monday 20 January 2025.

## Key messages

Children's wellbeing and learning benefitted from the stimulating, rich environment and the variety of opportunities available to them.

Policies and procedures should be updated to reflect the current restorative, nurturing and empowering approaches used with children. This would ensure all interactions consistently support children's wellbeing.

Children were cared for by the right number of skilled staff who used their knowledge and expertise to predict and respond to children's needs and preferences.

Children's safety and independent self-care skills should be further enhanced during mealtime tasks, such as closer supervision while eating and being involved in the preparation and serving of food.

Play and learning was enhanced for children through active partnerships with parents.

A strong ethos of striving for excellence meant that continuous improvements were being made in response to children's welfare and learning needs.

## 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?	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?

4 - Good

### Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children were mostly nurtured and supported through their daily experiences. Secure relationships with staff resulted in children feeling comfortable, safe and confident. Staff sensitively supported children in their self-regulation and social skills. A parent said, "My child is building lovely friendships and growing in confidence with every term, spending so much time outside in nature and learning something new every day". The service should review and update policies and some language used in children's personal plans to reflect this restorative and nurturing approach. This would also provide clarity for staff to ensure children's rights are protected at all times through best practice.

The flow of the day had a structure to it. For example, set gather times, lunch and snack times where play was stopped and children participated as a whole group. Most children responded well to this, while flexibility was there for children who did not. The 'protected play strategy' in the improvement plan ensured children's right to play was kept at the forefront of decision-making. To ensure play is also protected in the after school club, staff should be empowered to risk assess situations which impact on the adult to child ratio. For example, children should not need to accompany a group to the toilet to ensure ratios are met. This would promote children's autonomy and dignity and minimise disruption to their own play agenda.

Mealtimes took place in the school dining hall. Children benefited from this through building strong links to the school community and being able to connect with their siblings during a school day. Meals were sociable events where children practiced social manners, conversation and some self-care skills. Snack times took place in the nursery setting. While some children helped with practical tasks, there were missed opportunities for children to be independent and involved in the preparation and serving of their own food. These lifelong skills are essential for children to master through practice and the building of confidence. Food experiences should be incorporated into children's learning environment with daily opportunities for all. Furthermore, all food experiences should be closely supervised to reduce the risk of silent choking. While staff were always present, they were often involved in tasks, such as collecting and serving food, leaving children unsupervised while eating.

Children's individual wellbeing benefited from the effective use of personal planning. The plans were informative, current and relevant as they were reviewed regularly with parents. Children's progress was being monitored to ensure support continued to be effective. When necessary, staff worked alongside other agencies to ensure children got the support they needed. To further develop personal planning, support strategies agreed with other agencies should be clearly referenced. This would inform staff and aid consistent support for children.

In general, children's health needs were considered as medication was managed effectively according to best practice. To further enhance this, all non-medicated health issues should also be fully planned. This would enable staff to support children consistently.

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children had fun as they experienced a wide range of high quality play, learning and development opportunities throughout the day. Spontaneous play was rich and prolonged as children explored and used the environment, staff and each other as stimulation for creative ideas. For example, making ice blocks to experiment with ways to melt it. Planned learning was responsive to children's interests so it felt relevant to them. It was used to build knowledge and skills, offering stage appropriate experiences to allow achievement as well as challenge for individual children. For example, a phonics group to develop literacy skills.

Play spaces provided depth of experience through having a range of open-ended and real items. Literacy and numeracy development was naturally incorporated into the spaces and interactions with staff. As a result, children were enhancing their vocabulary, predicting and estimating in play, and practicing early writing skills with different materials.

Outdoor play took place in the accessible garden and a woodland area in the school grounds. These natural environments provided opportunities to build physical strength, discover wildlife and negotiate different terrains. Teamwork was a natural focus in the woodland area as children worked together to achieve different goals, such as moving large branches and finding places to hide.

Children were empowered to be fully involved in their play and learning as staff understood what they needed to flourish. Time and space enabled children to immerse themselves in play and follow their own thoughts and ideas. A parent said, "The children aren't rushed in their learning. Joy and curiosity is put first and then the learning follows". Staff were skilled at recognising when their interaction would enhance play and when to just let children be. Effective questions were used to enable children to develop their thinking skills. These were well placed to enhance the experience, rather than detract from it. As a result, children were contented and engaged. Management was aware of the need to monitor the impact of transitions throughout the day on play, when children were asked to move as a whole group. For example, potentially leaving their play unfinished because it was gather time.

Children's progress in learning was monitored through developmental trackers. These were used along with children's interests, to plan thoughtful and purposeful experiences. As a result, children were involved in their learning. Online journals were used to share learning with parents. Management was committed to developing the journals to reflect significant learning for each child. This would support the tracking of children's progress and help to plan further opportunities.

## 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

The setting was well furnished, comfortable and homely. It was a well-resourced, inviting and welcoming setting with natural light. Children's artwork and photos were attractively displayed and maintained with respect. Cosy spaces were available for children to rest or have quiet time. A parent said, "It's always such a welcoming and dynamic environment with such a huge variety of play stations available to the children".

The setting was safe, secure and well-maintained. The nursery was situated in the heart of the school grounds. Children had continuous access to the garden as the door was left ajar. While the garden was secured, the fences were low and the gates were accessible by school children. As a result, vigilance was needed at all times. Children were empowered to consider risk in their play and find solutions which involved them in risk assessment.

Infection prevention and control measures were in place such as table cleaning, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and handwashing. Children were familiar with when handwashing was expected and staff also gave reminders. Management should further consider a consistent, suitable space is used for personal care. This is to ensure it adheres to infection prevention and control best practice; and also protects children's dignity and privacy.

The indoor and outdoor environments were developmentally appropriate spaces. The large playroom had defined areas which were well-resourced and accessible for children. Spaces reflected children's interests and were presented in attractive ways to encourage intrigue. A spacious garden provided children with a range of opportunities for physical development and learning in a natural environment.

In addition to the setting, children could regularly access a wooded area on the school grounds, astro turf areas, the school library and a gym hall. Experiences for children extended into the local community with trips to the beach, local woodlands, a local care home and nearby shops to complement learning topics. These offered variety and new experiences for children.

## 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 improvements are well led

A shared vision, values and aims positively informed practice. A strong ethos ran through the nursery which was shared with the school community including parents. For example, striving for excellence through knowing children and responding to their needs and learning interests. Predominantly, practice reflected a strong investment in relationships and the provision of many opportunities for children to thrive.

Families were meaningfully involved and influenced change within the setting. Opportunities were available for parents to come into the setting. This let them see their children at play and experience the opportunities available to children. A range of methods were used to keep parents informed, such as newsletters, learning journals and notice boards in the cloakroom. To further enhance parental involvement, management should consider the benefits of parents being in the playroom at drop-off or pick-up times.

Parents were regularly asked to feedback on aspects of the service through questionnaires and surveys. This information was used to shape plans for moving forward, such the learning focus for stay and play sessions. Management was committed to creatively engaging parents to benefit children.

Quality assurance, including self-evaluation and improvement plans, were in place and leading to continuous improvement. A range of quality assurance processes ensured legislative requirements were adhered to, such as personal planning and medication. In addition, improvements were driven from self-evaluation in different aspects of the service. For example, reviews of the garden spaces and indoor spaces led to new resources or a change of focus; while reviews of accidents led to safer spaces. Staff and

management were involved in quality assurance and improvement planning, suggesting a shared leadership approach to drive commitment and action.

Reflection and self-evaluation were embedded across the team and facilitated through pastoral meetings, review meetings and using best practice and guidance documents in team meetings. As a result, the provision was responsive and mostly adhering to best practice. Moving forward, management should continue to seek out best practice relating to mealtimes, personal care and restorative practice. This would support further improvement for children.

### 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

Deployment and levels of staff were effective in ensuring high quality outcomes for children. Management understood the need for appropriate staffing to ensure high quality care. Therefore, children were cared for by enough staff to meet their needs, including during transition points such as lunchtime. All staff, including cover staff, were familiar with children, ensuring there was a consistency of care. Staff shared information with each other to benefit children in their day to day care.

The team worked flexibly throughout the day. For example, they assessed the needs of the environment and children's needs and responded to them. As a result, gaps were identified and covered by vigilant staff. This approach also gave staff some autonomy over their day which impacted positively on their motivation. Staff felt happy at work and appreciated their wellbeing being considered and supported. For example, through regular breaks and the provision of food.

Staff were knowledgeable and experienced, bringing a range of skills to complement each other. They delegated and guided each other sensitively and showed commitment to developing lead areas of the curriculum, in line with their interests and skills. Staff were calm, quiet, responsive, enthusiastic and mostly attuned to children. Their confident and assured approach provided security and stability for children, as well as a high quality experience. A parents said, "The staff are so engaging with the kids and offer so many wonderful ways to learn. They're patient, kind, encouraging and imaginative".

### 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	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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