

Hutchesons' Pre-School Day Care of Children

44 Kingarth Street
Glasgow
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 February 2025

Service provided by:
The Governor's of Hutchesons'
Educational Trust

Service provider number:
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CS2017363014

About the service

Hutchesons' Pre-School is a day care of children service located in Hutchesons' Grammar School in the south side of Glasgow. The service operates a satellite site at Hutchesons' Pollok Park. Children attend both services for five days on a two week rotational programme. The service is in partnership with Glasgow City Council to provide commissioned places for children aged between three and five years.

The service can accommodate a maximum of 64 children aged three to not yet attending primary school. Of those 64, 32 children will attend the pre-school at Kingarth Street and 32 will attend the satellite setting at Hutchesons' Pollok Park (H@PP).

The accommodation at Kingarth Street consists of two play spaces and a snug room. Children have access to a secure garden for physical play and outdoor learning and can access the school gym hall, lunch hall and playground.

The accommodation at Hutchesons' Pollok Park consists of twelve camp sites and a large open grass area. The sports hall can be accessed for shelter, warmth and activities during times of inclement weather.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 4 and 5 February 2025. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 16 parents and carers
- reviewed feedback from 11 staff members
- spoke with management and staff
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy, confident and having fun indoors and outdoors.
- Staff were kind, warm and nurturing in their interactions with children.
- Staff knew children well and were responsive to their needs.
- Management and staff should review their lunchtime routine to minimise interruptions to children's play and learning.
- Management and staff should continue developing planning systems to support children's progress and development.
- The manager was visible, friendly and approachable to children, families and staff.

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?	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 as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were confident and happy within both settings. Staff were warm, kind and nurturing in their interactions with children. Staff knew children well and were attentive to their needs. One parent commented, "Every child has a key worker who really understands and works with the child to better understand their needs." This contributed to the positive relationships children had with staff. Children and their families were given opportunities to form and maintain strong relationships with staff through home visits, transition events and stay and play sessions at both settings. This helped create respectful and trusting relationships between staff, children and families.

Improvements had been made to the mealtime experience in both settings. Children had opportunities to be responsible and develop independence skills through self-serving, using cutlery and tidying away items when finished. The lunch room in Kingarth Street was located downstairs away from the main playrooms. This meant children's play was stopped and their learning was interrupted to go for lunch. If children needed the toilet an adult had to leave the lunch room to take them. This reduced the number of adults available to support children when eating. The manager shared plans with us that consultation had taken place with the staff team to introduce a rolling lunch system in the playroom. We agreed that children would benefit from having lunch in the playroom upstairs. This would minimise interruptions to children's play and learning and would allow children to independently access toilets.

Personal plans were in place for children and contained information which supported staff to meet children's needs. We discussed with the manager how these could be further improved. This included key information being more accessible to staff and the recording of regular updates to reflect changes in children's lives. This would support staff to consistently meet the individual needs of all children throughout their time in the service.

We reviewed the storage and administration of medication within both settings and found that medication was stored and administered safely. Risk assessments were in place for some children and contained information to support children's health and wellbeing. We identified children who would benefit from risk assessments that included steps staff would take in an emergency. This would provide all staff with clear procedures to follow to support children who required life saving medication.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

We observed children having fun and being fully engaged in a variety of experiences in both settings. They had opportunities to lead their own play and learning which impacted positively on their confidence and sense of achievement. For example, at H@PP we observed a group of children independently working together to create a mudslide down a hill. Children were delighted with this, and spent a long period of time sliding down together and helping each other to climb up. This brought lots of laughter and supported deep friendships between children.

Play experiences at Kingarth Street supported children's development of language, literacy and numeracy skills. For example, children were focussed on drawing pictures and telling each other about their drawings. A group of children were taking turns matching pictures and counting when joining in a numeracy game.

Children's development and wellbeing benefited from the hybrid model that provided opportunities to learn indoors and outdoors. Some staff and parents told us this was a positive of the service. Comments included:

"Staff are outstanding and are motivated to create a great space for children to learn in. H@PP has grown into a fantastic learning space since the beginning. The outdoor garden is developing really well with flourishing ideas in progress."

"My children have great opportunities at Hutchesons' who always make their days fun but full of learning, within H@PP and Kingarth Street."

Management and staff were reviewing planning systems. We could see children were consulted in planning. Plans were responsive to their interests, and their ideas and thoughts were being taken forward by staff to support children's play and learning. We discussed with management how planning could be improved by capturing children's experiences and evaluations. This would show children's learning and progress, and support staff to offer depth and challenge to support children's development.

Online journals were used to share observations of children's play and learning with families. We saw inconsistent approaches in how observations were recorded, as not all gave details of the learning and skills taking place. We discussed this with management and were satisfied plans were in place to address this. Improvements to the recording of information has the potential to support staff to plan meaningful next steps to enhance children's play, learning and progression.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The nursery had its own separate entrance from the school, with a secure buzzer entry system. This enhanced children's safety and security when entering and leaving the building. Children had their own dedicated cloakroom space to keep personal items and displays were used to share information with families. This sent the message to children and families that they mattered.

Children at Kingarth Street were cared for in a comfortable, warm and welcoming environment, on the first floor of the building. The indoor playrooms offered plenty of space to meet children's needs. Children could move freely between two playrooms and had access to spaces and resources that promoted choice and curiosity. Children further benefited from access to a separate snug room. This was a cosy, calm space resourced with sensory materials to support children's emotional regulation. This contributed positively to children's emotional wellbeing.

At the time of the last inspection, children could not access the garden area as this was closed for refurbishment. At this inspection, the garden work was complete and children were able to use their garden area. Although there was no direct access to outdoors, children's choice was encouraged and accommodated to provide them with daily opportunities to play outside. The newly developed garden area provided a secure, multi-level space where children could explore, play and relax. Staff commented positively on the new space. One member of staff told us: "Having the garden completed has made a huge difference. This area has allowed us to offer a range of experiences we could not before." This supported children's development and extended their learning.

The satellite service at Pollok Park offered a dynamic play space. Some parents shared with us this was a key strength of the service. One parent commented "H@PP. Excellent facilities and fantastic opportunity for my [child] to learn about nature, learn new skills and become more active and aware of the environment." There was a variety of campsites to explore and the set up allowed children to be outdoors all day. The sports complex and pavilion provided spaces where staff could take children to warm up, eat lunch and change wet clothes. This meant that children were well-supported to access the outdoors, build resilience, and have a space where they could relax in times of inclement weather. Staff regularly checked in with children to ensure they were feeling good in the outdoor environment. Risk assessments and clear, safe boundaries ensured children were kept safe. This supported children to take risks and fully engage in challenging play in a safe way.

Improvements had been made to children's handwashing facilities at Kingarth Street. Lunch was served in a different room where children had access to a handwashing sink. We observed staff promoting good hand hygiene at both settings before children ate lunch. This meant the potential spread of infection was minimised, contributing to children's safety and health.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The manager and senior management team were friendly, approachable and engaged well with the inspection process. They were receptive to feedback and willing to make improvements to ensure good outcomes for children. The manager had a clear vision and ideas to further improve the service. We could see improvements had been made in some areas since the previous inspection and staff told us the positive impact this was beginning to have. One staff member commented, "New management has been a success, I am excited to see the provision continue to grow under such passionate leadership." The manager was covering both sites due to absence. Although there were leadership opportunities at all levels, we suggested this could be extended to help assist the manager at times of absence. This would effectively support the manager's ideas, vision and capacity for improving outcomes for children and their families.

An improvement plan was in place that clearly identified priorities that were relevant to improve the service. Some focus areas within the plan had been progressed, impacting on improved outcomes for children. For example, staff participated in curiosity approach training which had led to improvements in the layout and resourcing of both learning environments to support children's curiosity and imagination. This contributed to children experiencing quality play and learning opportunities both at Kingarth Street and H@PP.

A quality assurance monitoring calendar was in place and included self-evaluation against quality frameworks. We viewed evidence of best practice guidance being discussed at team meetings. This included Care Inspectorate guidance on keeping children safe and accounted for. This gave staff an opportunity to come together and reflect on practice to make positive changes to enhance children's safety.

Management understood the value of parents and staff contribution in quality assurance processes and regularly sought their views. We advised that feeding back to parents the outcome of consultations would help them understand how their opinions had affected change within the service. There were missed opportunities for children to be involved in consultation about recent changes to the environment. We discussed with managers that including children in consultation processes would support them to have ownership of the service.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Overall, we observed that there was enough staff in both settings to meet the needs of children throughout the day. There were staff absences in the service and staff shared with us the challenges they felt in meeting children's individual needs, and how this was impacting on their own wellbeing. We discussed this with leaders and they shared plans that were in place to recruit replacement staff and cover vacancies. This included posts to be advertised and the creation of their own bank of supply staff. Safer recruitment processes were in place to safeguard children, and a new member of staff joined the team on the second day of inspection. Some staff acknowledged this was a positive step to support the team. We were satisfied that the service had a plan in place to address staff challenges they were facing. We encouraged the management team to keep this under review, and continue to respond to any absences.

The staff team provided a range of skills and experience to the service within and across both environments. Staff had opportunities to meet together and participate in a 'staff swap' that allowed them to spend time with each other at both settings to support cohesiveness within the team. One parent commented, "The staff are professional, yet friendly and approachable with check ins at drop off and reports at pick up. Easy to speak to and work with you in finding solutions if issues arise." Staffing arrangements in place when children moved between settings, ensured children spent time with their keyworkers and other familiar adults and children. This consistency supported positive transitions between settings and promoted trusting relationships between children, staff and families.

We observed examples of positive communication and team working taking place at key points to ensure children were safe and accounted for. This included updating registers, and recording when children were accessing the garden or going downstairs for lunch. There were times of the day where communication could have been better when changes to routines took place. For example, lunch at H@PP was served indoors due to wet weather and staff became task focussed. This led to short periods of time where staff were busy helping children take off outdoor clothing and setting up the indoor space for lunch. This meant there were times they were not supervising all children closely when eating. We discussed with staff and managers, the need to engage in ongoing communication to support clearer responsibilities for sharing tasks. This would allow staff to deploy themselves in a way to ensure children's safety consistently.

Staff had regular opportunities for professional development to support them in their role. This included training on child protection, first aid and the curiosity approach. Some staff shared with us how this had impacted positively on their practice, "I currently did training on paediatric first aid which helped me to better be prepared, to be confident in dealing with an accident or incident should they occur. I have completed food hygiene and infection control which is beneficial as I will be confident in understanding areas that need improvement within the environment should there be any" and "I have undertaken training in curiosity approach, so I can help everyone in the team be supportive in adopting this new approach. I think it's important as a team we all work together towards a holistic approach to learning, to ensure children are receiving a consistent experience from all staff." This meant children benefited from a team who were committed to continued professional learning to support their care and development.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To support children's health and wellbeing needs, improvements should be made to the infection prevention and control procedures for the mealtime experience. Priority should be given to but not limited to the provision of accessible hand wash sinks for children and adults.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "The premises have been adapted, equipped and furnished to meet my needs and wishes" (HSCS 5.16).

This area for improvement was made on 12 February 2024.

Action taken since then

Lunches had been relocated to a different room that allowed access to handwashing facilities. We observed handwashing taking place for children and adults to minimise the spread of infection.

This area for improvement has been met.

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?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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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