

St. David's Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

West Pilton Crescent
Edinburgh
EH4 4HP

Telephone: 01313 323 500

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
3 March 2025

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002576

Service no:
CS2003015846

About the service

St David's Primary School Nursery is situated within a purpose-built school building on a shared site with Pirniehall Primary School in the North West area of Edinburgh. A collaborative approach to the use of the facilities, including a shared outdoor area, and joint working has continued to develop through this innovative opportunity for both schools.

The nursery consists of a large open plan playroom, with a kitchen area and toilet facilities for the children attending.

The nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 32 children aged three years and over.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 26 February 2025 between 9:00 and 17:00, we returned on 27 February 2025 to complete the inspection. 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;
- spoke with 11 members of their family;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life;
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff were skilled at engaging positively with children and families.
- Families were invited to be part of their child's life at nursery.
- Children had daily access to the outdoors for fresh air and exercise.
- The environment provided a comfortable and creative space for children to play.
- Leaders were knowledgeable about aspects of the service which required improvement.

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

Staff were warm and caring towards children, they responded to their needs both verbal and non verbal, listening to children through their emotions, words, and actions. They were tactile with the children and gave hugs to comfort children. Personal care was carried out in a respectful and caring manner. This nurtured children's security, confidence and positive relationships.

Children and families were supported by skilled staff collaborating with other professionals in a child's life, such as health visitors and speech and language therapists. Children who required additional support benefitted from visiting professionals. The additional support for learning (ASL) teacher shared strategies with staff to use with children. These included pictorial timetables to support routine and structure, the Playbox method to support engagement in play, deep pressure to support children to self regulate, song and object signifiers to support routine and transitions. Parents confirmed this and told us that 'Staff help my child to learn a lot, we have lots of meetings with staff. It's the best support we have had'. We discussed the benefits of recording the impact of the strategies, this would further support staff to ensure that identified strategies were consistently being used with children.

The service provided a rolling snack and lunch for children, this offered choice for children and meant that their play was not interrupted. Children's independence skills were promoted through self-serving. A staff member sat with children when they were eating contributing to a sociable experience. We discussed that staff must ensure that children do not get up from the table and walk about whilst eating.

Children's wellbeing was supported through the use of personal planning. Children and families were central to this process ensuring effective information sharing which was used by staff to promote consistency and continuity of care. There were systems in place to support communication with parents, both formal and informal. Information from parents was used effectively by staff to ensure positive outcomes.

Staff were knowledgeable about the potential impact on children of adverse childhood experiences and implemented resources to build children and family resilience when needed. This included signposting to other services, as well as practical support.

Where children required medication, this was appropriately stored. We discussed with staff that they had information which was not recorded. All information should be recorded, so that all staff are aware of what action should take if a child required medication. Steps had been taken to rectify this by the day of feedback.

Quality indicator 1.3 : Play and learning

The environment was well resourced, allowing children to choose where and what they played with, this enabled children to lead their own play. Staff supported children in their play, by being available to provide additional resources or scaffold play. Improvements had been made to the environment, through the introduction of loose parts and natural resources, which supported children's creativity and curiosity.

Resources were displayed in baskets with photographs which further supported children's choice. The home corner had attractive resources, wooden objects and tea-sets. Staff re-set areas throughout the day, which made it appealing for children to play. A well set up art area, playdough area with resources to support children's imagination, sand and water, provided opportunities for children to explore mathematical concepts through measuring, pouring and mixing. We discussed with staff, different ways in which they could present resources in the environment to provide more opportunities for children to access numeracy in their play.

Staff read to children throughout the day individually and in small groups. Different types of books were displayed in different areas of the nursery including outside, this included dual language, story and reference books. This supported children's interest in books, as well as developing communication, language and literacy skills.

Through observation and assessment of information, staff had a clear understanding of each child's stage of learning and development, allowing them to provide opportunities to support children to thrive. Each child had next steps recorded and opportunities were provided for them to achieve them. This contributed to children developing a broad range of skills.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through strong connections with the school, where they had Physical education (PE) lessons in the gym hall and attended school assembly. Children excitedly told us about their basketball lessons, while we looked at photographs. Visits to the local library, introduced children to more opportunities for the enjoyment of books and literacy. Engagement with Spartans football club, improved children's physical health through movement and coordination, as well as promoting engagement with the local community.

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 setting was comfortable, furnished to a high standard, welcoming with plenty of natural light and ventilation. Furniture was age appropriate and in good condition. The entrance area displayed information for parents, and children had access to their own space to store their personal items. This helped to promote a sense of belonging.

The setting was safe, secure, and well-maintained. Children had free flow access to the garden which was shared with Pirniehall Primary School Nursery. This opportunity for regular outdoor play provided children with a range of equipment to promote and develop their gross motor skills. Plans were in place for improvements to the nursery garden, which staff from both nurseries would be involved with. This was a positive move which would provide children with a more engaging space and increased opportunities for learning.

Children's safety was maintained and staff worked together to ensure that children were always accounted for, undertaking regular headcounts, such as when children moved between inside and outside, and when they arrived and left the setting. Staff identified and removed risks to children both indoors and outdoors. Children were encouraged to care for their environment and the resources within.

Robust infection prevention and control and food safety practices provide high levels of safety for children. Children were supported with hand washing and personal hygiene. This contributed to children being healthy.

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 deputy head teacher and the early years teacher had been pro-active at ensuring that their self evaluation and quality assurance processes were leading to improved outcomes for children. This was systematic and involved the whole team, who were included in the self evaluation and implementation of improvements. As a result, action being taken where areas for improvement had been identified, were having a positive impact on children, such as improvements to the environment and tracking of children's learning.

The deputy head teacher spoke about the work that had been undertaken to embed the vision and aims of the nursery into daily practice. They spoke passionately about providing the opportunities for all children to flourish and how this included supporting families. This strong leadership supported staff to have high aspirations for all children.

Staff were supported to improve their practice and encouraged to take on leadership roles within the nursery. One staff member was the literacy lead and had been promoting 'Book bugs' with families, visits to the local library, as well as increasing opportunities for children to mark make throughout the nursery. They were confident and passionate when telling us about their roles. This had the potential to extend staff knowledge and skillset and to continue to improve outcomes for children and their families

The nursery valued input from families, and recognised the importance of them being involved in their child's life at nursery. Opportunities were offered to parents in different ways, such as through questionnaires, parental consultations, stay and play, coming in to the nursery to bake, read a story, as well as daily informal conversations. Translators were used to support parents in meetings, and information about the nursery was available in different languages. This supported families involvement and collaborative working to impact positively on children.

The early years teacher told us that they had been working on the environment and the positive difference this had on the play experiences for children. This work was on-going, as improvements were continually being made to the environment to ensure that children could lead their own play. They had also been working with staff to upskill them in their understanding of developmental milestones and learning overview (DMLO), capturing and monitoring information about individual children and quality observations, all of which would enhance children's learning and development. The service was working with Edinburgh University around providing a culturally diverse curriculum to ensure inclusion for all.

Areas identified during the inspection, which would benefit from improvement, had also been identified in the nursery's self evaluation with action planned to address them. This demonstrated the effective strategies which were in place.

Staff told us the management team had an open door policy, and that they found them supportive and approachable. Comments included 'I feel so grateful for the leaders in this setting. They are always keen to help and to listen to you. If there is any problems they will try to solve it and to provide help' and 'the management team are approachable and empathetic and I feel support and valued'. There was a strong professional development and learning culture which supported shared reflections that ensured children were at the centre of all planning for play and learning.

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 were warm, nurturing, and caring. They worked well together to create a welcoming environment for children and families. This helped to create a positive atmosphere for both staff and children. The service was appropriately staffed during the day to ensure positive transitions and communication with families. Parents were very positive about staff and told us 'staff are friendly', 'communication is good, I can speak to any of the staff and go to them for advice', and 'staff are very good when I need help'.

Children and families benefitted from staff that were well trained, competent, skilled and registered with the relevant professional body. Staff were supported to reflect on their practice and effective use was made of staff skills and knowledge to support children. Staff engaged in a range of professional learning activities that built on and sustained their practice, such as Hanen training.

Although it was a newly formed team, staff worked well together and communicated with each other to ensure that children's needs were met. For example when staff and children were outside, colleagues ensured that they were aware of them should they require assistance.

Staff communicated through a variety of methods, for example, staff meetings and daily dialogue. However, work is needed to ensure that the team continue to develop to become a high performing team. This was impacted on by the different shift patterns which staff worked that prevented regular opportunities for the whole team to be together. Consideration should be given to ensuring that all staff have a voice within the team.

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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