

Carmondean Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Knightsridge Road West
Livingston
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
31 March 2025

Service provided by:
West Lothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002601

Service no:
CS2003017490

About the service

Carmondean Primary School Nursery provides a care service to a maximum of 72 children aged from 2 years to not yet attending primary school at any one time. No more than 10 are aged 2 years to under 3 years.

The nursery is located in a residential area in the town of Livingston, West Lothian. The service is close to local shops, parks and other amenities. Children are accommodated in one open plan playroom with access to a 'nurture nook' and separate dining area. Children can also access two enclosed outdoor gardens.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 26 March 2025 from 9:15 until 16:00 and Thursday 27 March from 8:45 until 15:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

During the inspection an inspector from the complaints team was present carrying out a complaints investigation.

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 children using the service
- reviewed 11 responses to our questionnaire
- spoke with staff and the management team
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children benefitted from kind, caring and nurturing interactions with staff.
- Children participated in a variety of play experiences which stimulated their natural curiosity, learning and creativity.
- A welcoming environment promoted an ethos of respect where positive relationships with parents supported partnership working.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation had resulted in changes which promoted positive outcomes for families.
- Staff deployment should consistently meet children's needs to ensure high-quality experiences for children.

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 care to support their overall wellbeing. They were engaged, happy and having fun. Close relationships between staff and children had been developed which helped children feel included and safe. Kindness and respect were evident, for example, staff and children negotiated and made decisions together. Mostly all parents agreed with the statement 'Overall, I am happy with the care and support my child receives in this service'. Comments we received included, "My child is always having fun" and "Every day my child will come home to tell me how much fun they are having while learning".

Building relationships as part of the transition to school was a strength of the service. Children spent time in school with staff and 'school buddies'. This helped to make them feel familiar with the school surroundings, and help build their confidence. 'Book buddies' from primary 6 attended the nursery to read stories and play with their younger peers. This holistic approach helped support nursery children's transitions into primary one and enhanced their learning opportunities.

Children benefitted from their families being warmly welcomed into the service. They were enabled to support their children to settle in. Establishing good working relationship with parents was important to the staff. There was daily communication with families at drop off and collection time as well as online updates. This contributed to creating positive attachments between children and staff, and enabled opportunity for information to be shared between nursery and home.

Children's care was supported with information gathered through a variety of personal planning tools. Staff demonstrated they knew the children well and were able to talk through individual children's routines, needs, and interests. These were reviewed at least every six months with parents to ensure staff had up to date information to meet individual children's needs.

Children with additional support needs had individual plans in place that outlined appropriate strategies to support their wellbeing. For example, visual signifiers helped guide children through daily routines and transitions and a designated 'nurture nook' provided a calm space for children to relax and self-regulate. However, these strategies were not always implemented consistently. At times, staff did not respond to children's cues for support when they were engaged with others. To ensure children feel well supported, staff should consistently apply agreed strategies and remain responsive to each child's needs throughout the day.

Medication storage and clear information to meet children's needs including emergency medication and effective procedures were in place to safeguard children. Staff were knowledgeable on how to respond if they had concerns around a child's wellbeing and welfare. This contributed to keeping children safe.

Mealtimes were generally relaxed and unhurried. Children were provided with opportunities to develop responsibility and independence skills. For example, they self-served, poured their own drinks, and cleared away their plates and cutlery. Children's allergies and food preferences were well catered for through staff awareness of any allergies or dietary requirements. This helped keep children safe and well. Staff could

further develop how they support meaningful and stimulating conversations with children during mealtimes to enhance the experience further.

Quality indicator 1.3 : Play and learning

Children had fun and participated in a variety of play experiences which stimulated their natural curiosity, learning and creativity. As a result, they engaged in play for sustained periods of time, for example, at the dough table with a range of natural resources, and making "lemon and garlic soup" in the house area. This increased their confidence and supported their wellbeing and involvement. Parents told us, "There are always fun opportunities" and "We have stay and play opportunities to be involved in our child's learning".

Play experiences were in place to support children to develop skills in language, literacy, and numeracy through daily 'super skills' activities. Staff were available to children for storytelling and discussions which supported their enjoyment of literacy and the development of their talking and listening skills.

Mathematical concepts were supported by staff at the water tray, for example, with different sizes of containers and comparing volume.

Planning approaches were child-centred and followed children's interests. There was a balance of intentional promotions and spontaneous learning documented. Floor books were used to capture children's interests, including what they had learned. Next steps were identified to extend learning further. Staff encouraged children to talk about their learning and what they wanted to know more about. This ensured that targets were meaningful to children and that they were motivated to achieve. An online digital platform shared observations of children's achievements which were individual and focused on learning. This provided an opportunity for families to get an insight into their child's play and learning and allowed them to share home learning and experiences with the setting.

Staff interactions were supportive and helped to promote a positive atmosphere. Some staff used effective questioning to extend and develop children's individual learning. For example staff listened to children's ideas and encouraged them to play games and take turns. However There were a few missed opportunities to extend children's thinking. Staff should continue to develop questioning to extend learning and enable all children to widen their skills through play.

Children's play and learning was supported through connections to the local community. This included daily walks, trips to local shops, library and forest sessions. These experiences stimulated children's interests and curiosities, however at present were not regular. Further opportunities for learning in the local and wider community would continue to develop strong and meaningful connections.

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 and families benefitted from a warm and welcoming environment. It was well-furnished, comfortable and spacious, with lots of natural light and ventilation. Children had ample space to meet their needs and quieter rest areas supported their wellbeing. A safe and secure door entry system ensured the safety of children at drop off and collection times. Visual displays, such as whiteboards supported staff in

knowing how many children were present at any given time. The entrance area displayed photographs and information for parents, and children had access to their own space to store their personal items. This helped promote a sense of belonging.

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of infection prevention and control procedures. Children were encouraged to wash their hands independently before mealtimes and after toileting and personal care. This supported and helped minimise potential risks of infection and helped create a safe environment. Toilet and nappy changing areas were clean, with personal protective equipment (PPE) stored appropriately to reduce the risk of infection spread.

The playrooms were clean, tidy and uncluttered. Quiet spaces were available to support children's wellbeing, for example, cosy story areas, an outdoor wooden shed and the 'nurture nook'. These helped children to relax and self-regulate. Children had access to a range of resources that were well-organised and encouraged exploration and fun. There was ample space for children to extend their learning and interests with their chosen activities, for example, building bricks, art and crafts and house play. Staff told us they continually reflected on how children used areas within the playroom and made changes to suit the changing interests and needs of children.

Children moved confidently between the indoor and outdoor spaces and were regularly out playing in the nursery garden experiencing physical play and exercise. The outdoor space provided physical opportunities, including swings, planks and boxes and natural and open-ended materials that supported curiosity and creativity. These supported children's strength and balance and stimulated their imagination. There was potential for the safety of children to be compromised whilst playing outdoors. For example, due to the layout of the garden, on occasion staff positioning did not always ensure children were effectively supervised. We discussed with the management team they should consider at all times, a minimum of two staff to ensure all areas of the garden were monitored and supervised.

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 improvements are led well

The management team and staff fully engaged in the inspection process. They demonstrated their commitment to the service and were motivated to make improvements to ensure positive outcomes for children. Staff told us they felt supported and valued by the management team. Their supportive leadership resulted in a staff team who were confident in their roles and ensured children and their family's needs were at the centre of their work. Staff told us "It's a great place to work" and "I am proud of the journey we have been on recently and I am excited for the future of Carmondean".

The service valued opinions and involvement of children and their families. Regular feedback from families took place through a variety of methods such as, face to face discussions, questionnaires, and feedback requests. This supported families to feel included and respected as partners in their children's development and learning. Although the majority of parents agreed they and their child were involved in a meaningful way, not all parents felt this and comments included, "We don't always get asked" and "I don't feel we are involved, more being told of changes". Having people more meaningfully involved would ensure their views and suggestions were included, respected and influenced change within the service.

A realistic improvement plan with achievable targets supported staff to have a good understanding of the vision of the service and their role in improving outcomes. The manager told us gathering views and opinions of children and families had been identified as part of the service's ongoing improvement work. This will support the service to identify future priorities in collaboration with children and families and contribute to them being included in service developments.

Quality assurance systems were in place to drive forward positive changes, improving outcomes for children. For example, processes ensured that various aspects of the service were monitored, and changes made to improve practice. For example, the lunch experience and the use of spaces within the setting and the adding of the 'nurture nook' to support self-regulation. Quality interactions were observed and shared with staff, these should continue to identify how support can impact on experiences for some children.

Newly appointed staff told us they had been warmly welcomed by the staff and management team. They commented that their induction was positive and helped them to understand their roles and responsibilities and also the expectations of the management team. They were paired with a mentor to support them and make them feel welcomed and included.

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

Children benefitted from a nurturing, caring and dedicated staff team who were warm and responsive in their approach. They worked well together, and were respectful and considerate in their interactions with each other. As a result, children felt loved and very well cared for.

Parents' comments were positive in support of staff and included, "I would like the staff to know they are amazing and are a credit to the kiddies" and "Staff are easy to talk to, friendly and understanding".

Staff were deployed to promote continuity of care and were flexible in moving across areas as needed. The management team supported staff by spending regular time on the nursery floor, including during busier times of the day. This helped build positive working relationships and allowed time for professional discussion. While we found that adult to child ratios were met, at times staff deployment impacted on the quality of experiences available to children. Staff meeting the individual needs of some children impacted on the team's ability to meet the needs of all children. Further consideration should be given to the wider group, so all children experience quality interactions, and staff are available to respond to children's interests (see area of improvement 1).

The staff team brought a mix of experience, knowledge and skills to benefit children's care and learning. These skills helped staff to observe children and appropriately identify how to enhance their development. For less experienced staff, there were opportunities for role modelling and to come together as a team to support professional dialogue and effective practice.

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 included outdoor play and children with additional support needs.

Areas for improvement

1. The provider should ensure that there are enough skilled and competent staff based within the nursery to ensure high-quality experiences for children.

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

"My needs are met by the right number of people" (3.15).

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 promote their individual learning and development the service should provide children with a choice of a rich variety of experiences. Consideration should be given to;

Supporting children to lead their own learning by ensuring they have the resources to do this.

Developing opportunities which stimulate creativity and curiosity in the play environment.

Re-establish effective planning cycles to ensure all children are receiving a wide range of play and learning experiences.

This area for improvement was made on 11 January 2024.

Action taken since then

Improvements had been made to the environment and audits and regular review of resources carried out. Children were engaged and stimulated by a variety of resources including natural resources that provided creativity and curiosity. Planning cycles were both intentional and responsive in meeting children's needs and interests. Training and support on planning had been provided by the Local Authority Early Years Team.

This area of improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To protect children's health, wellbeing and safety needs, the provider should ensure children are cared for in a safe and hygienic environment. This should include but not be limited to:

Carrying out appropriate maintenance and repairs within the children's toilet.

Ensuring children and staff carry out regular handwashing at key times throughout the session.

The service links with environmental health regarding staff access to sinks to promote effective handwashing.

Senior management team have oversight to ensure they can identify and address gaps in infection prevention and control practices and risk assessments.

This area for improvement was made on 11 January 2024.

Action taken since then

The service has created reporting systems using log books to record and action any maintenance, repairs and cleaning. Regular audits for infection, prevention and control were carried out by the management team. Sinks were identified for clear purpose (handwashing) and staff promoted handwashing at key points throughout the day. A cleaning schedule had been developed and implemented by all staff and the management team had taken advice from Environmental Health.

This area of improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure the quality of children's experiences are improved, the provider should implement robust quality assurance processes, including self-evaluation, covering key areas of practice. This should include, but not be limited to:

Monitoring children's play and learning experiences.

Monitoring of staff practice.

Evaluating and improving the nursery.

This area for improvement was made on 11 January 2024.

Action taken since then

Quality assurance processes and audits were in place and having a positive impact on staff practice and children's outcomes. These included observing staff practice and audits of play experiences. The service was continuing to develop self-evaluation processes using key documents to support.

This area of improvement has been met.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

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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