

Hilltop Nursery School Day Care of Children

Kings Park Primary School
44 Knightsbridge Drive
Glasgow
G44 4JS

Telephone: 01416 491 786

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 May 2025

Service provided by:
Glasgow City Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003390

Service no:
CS2003014888

About the service

Hilltop Nursery School is located within Kings Park Primary School in the Kings Park area of Glasgow. The nursery have dedicated space within the school. The service is close to parks, shops and public transport links.

The service is provided by Glasgow City Council and is registered to provide pre-school education and day care to a maximum of 100 children aged from two years to those not yet attending primary school.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 12 and 13 May 2025 between 09:00 and 17:00 on both days. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. During our inspection there were 75 children attending the service on Monday 12 May in the morning, 74 in the afternoon and 89 attending on Tuesday 13 May in the morning, with 77 attending in the afternoon. 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:

- received electronic feedback from 36 families who used the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

Key messages

- Children were happy, confident and secure in the setting.
- Children were cared for by a skilled and motivated management and staff team.
- Staff knew children very well and responded well to their individual needs.
- Children benefitted from environments which were well resourced to support learning.
- The management and staff team are committed to the continuous development and improvement of the service.

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

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|--|---------------|
| How good is our care, play and learning? | 5 - Very 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?

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 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children received a high standard of nurturing care and support from staff who knew children and families very well. Staff were warm, caring and loving towards children. They were responsive to children's individual needs, treating them with respect and sensitivity. These individual needs were documented well through personal plans developed in close conjunction with families. This highlighted the commitment of staff to work in collaboration with families to obtain information about children's health, safety, wellbeing needs and individual care routines. Arrangements were in place to ensure these were reviewed with families to set wellbeing targets for their children. Almost all families who provided feedback confirmed the ways in which they were involved and consulted about their children's care. Some of their comments included:

"My child's care plan is updated on a regular basis, if any information changes about my child I let staff know and they update this. I feel communication is good from the nursery and as mentioned before, targets are set for my child that are very personal to their learning and development." and "I am kept well informed of my daughter's care plan and targets through seesaw, parental phone calls updating on child's progress and performance of learning slots each term and target setting."

Staff were aware of children's health and medical conditions, including allergies and dietary intolerances. Medication systems were in place and overall, in line with best practice. We asked the manager to ensure that any emergency medication required followed the child, for example staff should ensure that emergency medication is taken outdoors when the child goes outdoors. This will prevent any potential delay in a child receiving emergency medication.

The service provided snacks and a hot lunch to children. Younger children enjoyed their lunch in a small cosy dining area. We observed staff supervising children safely over lunchtime. Staff invited children to choose what they wanted for their lunch and supported them to make healthy choices. Where children required help staff were quick to respond in a kind and gentle way. Where possible children were encouraged to be independent. Older children ate lunch in a large dining hall. Children were distributed over two sittings. Children sat in small groups and were supported by a member of staff at each table. Lunchtime was a sociable experience for children, they enjoyed chatting to their peers and staff members. We observed children leaving the table when they were finished. Children who required more time were not rushed or hurried. This highlighted how staff valued and respected children and showed how they strived to meet their individual needs.

Younger children had opportunities to rest and sleep when they needed to. Appropriate resources such as sleep mats and bedding were available to ensure children could do this safely and comfortably. Safe and effective systems were in place to ensure that bedding was washed and replenished frequently. This helped to minimise the spread of infection and keep children safe and well.

The management and staff team were very aware of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. Staff were aware of reporting procedures if they had any concerns about a child. Management were secure in their knowledge of how to consult with and make referrals to other agencies if required. Regular child protection training for management and staff helped to keep everyone's knowledge up to date in order to safeguard and protect children and families.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were having fun as they played. They were able to lead their own play for most of the day, choosing where they wanted to play. Resources were displayed in a way that engaged their curiosity and encouraged them to take ownership of their play. As a result, all children were engrossed in play for long periods of time.

Children were able to choose to play indoors or outdoors throughout the course of the day to suit their choices and interests for play and staff were responsive to these. Outdoors there were opportunities for children to join in physical play which provided opportunities for development of gross motor skills. Children enjoyed playing on the physical apparatus such as the climbing frame and slide, rope ladder and riding and steering bikes. Staff were confident to engage children in challenging risky play.

Children benefitted from a range of high-quality resources and loose parts across all playrooms. We observed children moving around playrooms. They were confident in choosing resources and activities which they were interested in. Staff use skilled interactions to support children's developing early literacy, language and numeracy skills. Some children were exploring and looking for mini beasts and insects outdoors. Staff supported their interests and asked them to try and remember what mini beasts they had found the previous week. Children enjoyed this reflection and excitedly shared what they had found. Staff asked children meaningful questions, introduced new language and supported children to consolidate their learning through familiar play and learning opportunities, such as reading favourite stories. Staff recognised when to engage and when to stand back. This contributed to children developing their play at their own pace. Families who provided feedback were very positive about how their children learned, and the experiences provided within the setting some of their comments included:

"Through See Saw it is evident to me my children are consistent involved in multiple creative learning opportunities throughout the day. This includes a variety of play based activities that are literacy and numeracy rich. Along with this all of the experiences provided by Hilltop allow my children to be creative, take risks, provide opportunities to have personal and group achievements. All activities are well planned out and hold focused for example a science lessons at Halloween called Fizzy Pumpkins." and "My child has been involved in a variety of learning experiences both indoors and outdoors and I love seeing these shared on seesaw. The most recent experiences were learning about space and taking part in astronaut training and learning about Chinese New Year. My child loves spending time in the house corner, drawing and recently enjoyed making pizza to bring home and cook for dinner."

Staff recorded and commented on children's progress and development on an online App "See Saw." Staff evaluated plans and recorded meaningful next steps to support children's progression. We suggested that there was an opportunity for children to be further involved in planning their learning by recording their ideas through big books and planning records. Families told us how they valued the information they received on See Saw which informed them of their children's progress. Some of their comments included. "The learning and targets posted on seesaw by staff is great and so individual to my child, I feel I have a good knowledge of my child's learning and development at nursery." and "The communication we receive via See Saw shows how consistent the staff are in ensuring the children receive engaging and enriching experiences suited to their needs and learning abilities."

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 warm and welcoming, and furnished to a high standard. The playroom was well ventilated and full of natural light. Children had ample space to play in, with resources displayed in a way that encouraged their independence and curiosity. This gave children a strong message that they mattered.

Staff had worked hard to review and improve environments. The introduction of neutral colours and soft lights helped to create a more nurturing and calming environment. Staff reported very positively about the impact this had on children and noise levels. We observed the impact of this in practice, as we noticed children engaged in play and regulated.

We observed the environment to be generally clean, bright and well maintained. Effective procedures were in place to minimise the potential spread of infection. The setting benefitted from janitorial and cleaning staff to help maintain the cleanliness of the building. Maintenance and repairs were reported to the janitor who either repaired or passed onto facilities for bigger jobs where tradesmen were required. The service reported generally repairs and maintenance were carried out timeously.

Play spaces indoors and outdoors reflected children's interests and sparked curiosity. We observed children indoors and outdoors using science and mathematical resources to look for bugs, examine plants and programme electronic toys.

Children enjoyed being outdoors, although they did not have direct access, procedures were in place to ensure that children knew they had the opportunity to play outdoors whenever they wanted to. We observed staff communicating effectively with each other over walkie talkie to support children safely back to playrooms when they wanted to come in or go outdoors.

Children were very confident dealing with the challenge of getting outdoors. They were familiar with procedures and systems in place to keep them safe when moving on stairwells and corridors. This was also evident when children were transitioning to the dining hall. The setting had developed and regularly reviewed risk assessments to support changes to the environment and/or resources. We heard staff discussing potential risks and risk assessments when supporting a child who was using real tools.

Children were cared for in playrooms according to their age and stages of development. Children had plenty of space to play and relax. Children who required a sleep could sleep safely and comfortably when they needed to. Staff responded to children's cues when they wanted to sleep. This ensured they were meeting children's individual needs. Effective procedures were in place to monitor and check the safety of sleeping children. Older children had safe cosy spaces where they could relax comfortably, this supported their wellbeing.

We received very positive feedback from families about the quality of the environment and the setting, one of their comments included:

"Throughout Hilltop it is evident that children's choice is at the heart of everything they do. Every morning my children can choose to go outside or stay inside from first thing. The indoor building provides such an engaging environment from as soon as we walk in for example the counting steps, fairy lights, children's pictures and experiences, the library outside etc. Hilltop has so many accessible rooms that the children all get to explore - even as simple as walking upstairs to their canteen and practise area rooms for the nativity. This provided my children with invaluable experience of walking safely round a building, following stairway rules and health and safety."

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 improvement are led well.

Children and families benefitted from a manager and management team who were skilled, experienced and committed to the continuous improvement and development of the service. They were supportive leaders who coached and supported staff to develop and progress. Staff told us that they felt listened to and valued by the management team. As a result children received consistently positive outcomes.

The management and staff team recognised the importance of connecting with families to support the life and work of the setting. They respected families' opinions and recognised the value they could bring to the setting. The inclusive environment offered ensured everyone was involved and included in the setting. Families who provided feedback told us that they felt involved in the setting, they valued the opportunities they had. Some of their comments included:

"I have been asked to come and read a story in my native language and share about culture traditions." and "The stay and play sessions offered throughout the year are a great chance to see what they like to be doing during their day."

Robust quality assurance processes supported improved experiences and outcomes for children and families. Staff participated in the self-evaluation process and reflected well together which enabled them to bring about positive change. A cycle of improvement had been embedded with key priorities identified and actions followed up to assess whether changes resulted in improvements and what impact they had on children's experiences.

There were regular team meetings where all staff were supported to reflect on the service provided, evaluate learning opportunities and resources available. They could also share any feedback or suggestions they might have. All staff told us they felt supported and valued and respected as a skilled team. They confidently spoke about how they had been actively involved in self-evaluation, the identification of priorities, introducing improvements and how these had positively impacted on the care, play and learning of the children.

Effective audits and monitoring informed the development of staff practice and improvements across all aspects of the service. As a result, children experienced high quality care and support which was tailored to their needs.

We received some very positive feedback from staff about how they were valued and supported by the management team. One of their comments included:

"The manager is extremely supportive and approachable and will always try to help staff out where she can. I think she has a very positive approach to leadership and tries to lead by example and empower all staff. We have wellbeing meetings on a Friday which gives us a chance to come together as a staff team, and I think we all get on well and have gelled well as a team together. I think everyone is open with each other and the management team will always try to support us and will ask for our opinions when implementing changes."

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

The management team valued the importance of ensuring the service was always appropriately staffed. Staff deployment was carefully planned to support the needs of the children.

Staff communicated very well with each other when they and or children were moving around the setting. The effective use of walkie talkies supported staff communication. They ensured that they told colleagues where they were going and ensured accurate registers were maintained. This included marking children in and out of the building when they went to and from the garden. These effective procedures helped to keep children safe.

Staff shared that they felt valued and supported by the management, professionally and personally. They told us they had weekly protected time off the floor for planning and observations to ensure continued support and learning for children. Staff breaks were planned to minimise the impact on children and to ensure staff had the opportunity to relax. One staff member commented "Management have a lot of life experience and always make time to listen. They will go the extra mile to assist all if they can. We are praised, valued and ideas if possible are taken forward."

In order to provide consistent care and support for children the management had introduced a two key worker system. This meant that when a child's main key worker was unavailable, through absence or annual leave that their known second keyworker was responsible for their care. This system helped children and families to know who was looking after them. It also helped children feel safe and secure in the setting. One parent who provided feedback told us "All staff know my child well. Her key workers have a great understanding of her needs and are very supportive."

During busier times of the day management were available to provide support to children and staff. A member of the management team met each child and their parent on arrival at the setting. This welcome highlighted how the management team valued and respected children and families.

Staff and management were committed to their continuous professional development. This was evident through the training staff had engaged in. New staff received a robust induction using the National Induction Resource. The manager ensured that all staff were familiar with this resource in order for them to be able to fully support and mentor new staff. The meaningful and robust process of induction supported staff to have the confidence, skills and knowledge to support and care for children.

Staff were encouraged to access training linked to their individual development needs and the needs of individual children attending the setting. Reflecting on training after having the opportunity to implement learning into practice supported staff to fully assess the impact of the training and improve outcomes for children.

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

The provider should ensure that the nursery environment is safe, hygienic and in a good state of repair.

This area for improvement was made on 8 March 2018.

Action taken since then

Some refurbishment had been made to the environment since our last inspection. We found the environment to be safe, hygienic and in a good state of repair. We have therefore concluded that 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

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| 1.1 Nurturing care and support | 5 - Very 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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