

Blackhall Nursery Day Care of Children

Ravelston Park Pavilion
Craigcrook Road
Edinburgh
EH4 3RU

Telephone: 01313 328 296

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 May 2025

Service provided by:
Blackhall Nursery

Service provider number:
SP2009010477

Service no:
CS2009229790

About the service

Blackhall Nursery is situated in a converted sports pavilion within Ravelston Park in the North West of Edinburgh. The accommodation consists of an entrance, cloakroom, a play room with dining and kitchen area, toilets and office space. Children also have access to two outdoor play spaces, one at the back of the building and one to the side.

The nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children aged from three years to entry into primary school.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday, 13 April 2025 between 09:15 until 17:00 hours, returning on Wednesday, 14 April 2025 from 09:15 until 12:00 hours. 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 and families using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- reviewed feedback from 27 families.

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.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Children experienced positive interactions that were nurturing and supportive.
- Children had the opportunity to experience and learn in nature through woodland walks.
- Staff were committed to their role, ensuring children were supported and cared for.
- Children could independently access indoors and outdoors throughout the day, and make choices about their play.

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?	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 evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children with very few areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

The nurturing ethos and respectful approaches meant that children and families were supported by staff who genuinely cared for them. A parent told us, "I feel we have a good, honest relationship with staff and whenever we need to be notified about something, it's done in a safe and caring manner." This demonstrated that the staff worked in partnership with the parent to ensure the child was effectively supported.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) were included in children's play through Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators. Each indicator was a playful character that was attractively displayed. Most children were confident in their understanding of what each character represented, and were heard speaking about them in their play and conversations. Achievement stickers were also related to this. Children were observed using their photograph name label to place in the emotions jars to name their emotions. This meant that children were aware of their rights and wellbeing through an approach that was meaningful to them.

Children's wellbeing was supported through effective personal plans that were developed in partnership with parents. We were told by a parent, "My child's personal plan is sent home regularly for us to review and add to/comment on, and it is available at any point out with this. Staff ask for our feedback and we can choose how much we want to share and how much to be involved." A child-centred approach to settling new children into the service was done at a pace that was comfortable for each child. Information from parents and home were used to guide staff in supporting children. This let the child know that staff were responsive to their interests.

Children benefitted from mealtimes that were calm and unhurried, and were familiar with routines, including self-service, selecting their seats and tidying up after mealtimes. Children's independence was further supported by rolling mealtimes, allowing them to make choices about when they ate. Staff sat with children during mealtimes and had conversations about their day. This ensured children were supervised and were part of social interactions. The service valued being part of the local community with established links with the local primary school and the annual community sports day. The service had a library box situated outside the building for local people to take and leave books. Children's relationships with their local community were strengthened through being part of these events. A parent described the service as "the jewel in the park".

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Planning approaches were child led and reflected children's interests and seasonal changes. Children's voices were captured within observations, learning journals, responsive plans and floor books. Each child had a section of the wall in the service that had photos of them at play and their next steps. This enabled children to feel valued and respected. Children led their own learning by setting their own goals. A child said that they wanted to learn to count to 100, when staff highlighted that this was a big number the child agreed but wanted to set this goal. This meant that children were empowered to make decisions.

Children benefitted from the opportunity to participate in weekly focus sessions including baking, science and visits to the local woodlands. A parent commented, "There's always something new and interesting going on at nursery: woodland walks, tasty Tuesday, science Wednesday, baking Thursday, packed lunch on Friday." Children's experiences were shared with parents through the digital app. This meant that parents could see what their child had been participating in and created opportunities to have further conversations at home.

Children's creativity and curiosity was supported through 'Our book of stories' and the provocations that were attractively displayed in the cabinet to ignite their imagination. Children had the opportunity to write, draw or have a member of staff scribe their story. Staff used open ended questions including "I wonder what would happen if ...?" to encourage children to expand on their story.

Children experienced variety in outdoor play, including loose parts, physical activity and nature. Children monitored lifecycles of caterpillars, ladybirds and tadpoles. This encouraged their interest in the natural world. Opportunities for reflection were encouraged with a child comparing the difference in growth from the tadpoles in the nursery to those in her home.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children with very few areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a setting that was clean, comfortable and inviting. The use of lamps and natural light created a calm space indoors. The entrance area and corridor were attractively presented with informative displays about the service and events in the local community. Parents were able to view children's experiences through well-presented wall displays and floor books that were accessible to them. This provided a sense of inclusion for children and their families.

Children were kept safe through effective risk assessments that were reviewed regularly. Staff supported children's understanding of risks through skilful questions. For example, several children were sliding backwards down the slide outdoors. Staff asked, "Do you think that is safe?", and "What could make it safer?" This prompted a child to get mats and place them around the slide. This meant that children were given opportunities to problem solve and create solutions that were right for them. To enhance this further, the service could consider how children could lead the development and reviews of risk assessments relating to play.

Both indoors and outdoors, there were a variety of resources and loose parts to support play and learning. As a result, children were busy and engaged in their play. Cosy areas had been created indoors and outdoors for children to have a quiet space or to enjoy a book with soft covers, cushions and sheltered spaces.

Infection prevention and control measures including washing hands were supported sensitively with staff reminding some children how long to wash their hands for. For example, saying "I don't think that was long enough, what do you think?" children responded by returning to wash their hands, demonstrating that hand washing was a frequent daily experience.

Pick-ups and drop-offs were managed well, with staff in key positions with responsibilities. For example, signing children out or providing feedback to parents. As a result, children were kept safe and parents were provided with updates from staff and an opportunity to chat with other parents.

The garden was secure with gates being locked and checked at key points across the day. Walkie talkies were used by staff to communicate to each other indoors and outdoors; this meant that staff moving away from areas was minimised. Children were familiar with the Care Inspectorate staying safe campaign and a soft toy of SIMOA the elephant was accessible for children and used to support conversations on safety.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children with very few areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Visions and values were underpinned by UNCRC and Getting it right for every child. Attractive displays in the entrance area and throughout the nursery communicated to parents and children what the values looked like in daily experiences. Children were observed upholding the values in their play. Two children were very excited to inform staff and their friends that they had "tidied up without being asked" and received a sticker completed by staff detailing their actions. As a result, this kept values relatable to children through daily life experiences.

Established quality assurance systems were implemented across the service. Staff practice and development was supported through regular meaningful observations and constructive feedback. As a result, staff had the opportunity to reflect and develop practice. There was a shared understanding of the purpose of self-evaluation across the team and improvements were made at a steady pace.

Effective systems were in place to support quality assurance and self-evaluation. A quality assurance calendar ensured that tasks were distributed across the year. Guidance documents were used to inform approaches to self-evaluation. For example, environmental tool kits posed questions to consider when evaluating play areas. This meant that play spaces were considered and informed by thoughtful consideration of best practice and the interests of children.

The team had worked hard to develop how they plan for children's learning to ensure that children were at the centre of activities. The manager had led the team to reflect on practice and provision using current guidance frameworks to facilitate professional discussions. For example, the home area was evaluated and next steps identified to create opportunities for children to explore imaginative play and to use authentic resources.

Established approaches to family engagement including stay and play, sessions were available for parents to spend time with their child and also to share relevant interests and hobbies with children. For example, a parent shared their knowledge of dinosaurs and fossils with children who had the same interests. This meant that children and parents could share learning experiences together.

Children benefitted from a well-represented committee board and parent fundraising group. This provided additional support to management and enabled the service to purchase new resources. A parent described

the service as "Blackhall nursery is a community nursery and has an amazing community spirit. There are lots of activities organised to help support and fundraise for the nursery. Similarly they are always looking for support and feedback to help them reflect and develop the service they provide and always then act on suggestions."

Parents were consulted with through questionnaires, conversations and emails. Parents' responses were displayed on a 'what you told us, what we did' wall board. This demonstrated to parents how their contributions supported the development of the service. Ideas for the improvement plan were shared with parents and responses helped to select the priorities. A parent commented, "The nursery always asks for our feedback and listens to all suggestions."

The team valued children's views and provided opportunities for children to contribute to the development of the service. For example, children participated in menu planning for snack and were part of the recruitment process for new staff. Children were asked what personal qualities and attributes they would like a new member of staff to have, and this was used as an interview question. This demonstrated how children's participation was meaningful and impacted positively on the service.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where major strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children with very few areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The deployment of staff across the service was well managed to support children's needs. Staff worked closely with each other to ensure children had access to the full provision across the whole day. Staff absences were managed through the service's supply staff. This meant that children were cared for by staff who knew them and the service well. Effective measures were in place to ensure that staff were deployed across the service throughout the day. For example, having additional staff at busier times, such as lunch time. This meant that there was enough staff to allow children to experience a rolling lunch and have the opportunity to manage how and when they had lunch.

Staff communicated effectively with each other, filling any gaps when staff were taken away from a task and ensuring that there were enough staff to care for the children. This adaptability allowed for children to freely play indoors and outdoors, moving across the spaces in response to their interests.

Staff were responsible and took ownership for their own learning. Annual reviews provided an opportunity to reflect and identify continuous professional learning. Staff spoke enthusiastically about their training and development as part of their role in the service. As a result, children were being cared for by staff who were committed to the service to provide the best opportunities for children.

Management and staff recognised the skills and expertise in each other and viewed the service as a team approach. This demonstrated a motivated team who were committed to developing their practice for the benefit of all.

New staff were supported by a mentor as part of their induction, this ensured that they were being supported to know the service, children and expectations about practice. Staff supporting the service during

periods of staff absence were also provided with appropriate information to ensure consistency in care and provision for children.

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
1.5 Effective transitions	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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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