

Towerbank Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Figgate Bank
Edinburgh
EH15 1HX

Telephone: 01316 691 551

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 May 2025

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002576

Service no:
CS2003017062

About the service

Towerbank Primary School Nursery is a day care of children service. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 40 children aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is provided from Towerbank Primary School. It comprises of one playroom with direct access to a large enclosed garden. The service is close to local transport links, shops, parks and the beach.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 and 28 May between 09:00 and 17:00. 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 people using the service and four members of their families;
- reviewed 10 completed questionnaires from families;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life;
- reviewed documents.

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 and nurturing interactions from staff.
- Staff had built strong relationships with children and families.
- Children had the opportunity to learn in nature.
- Children benefitted from staff who were effectively deployed to support positive outcomes.
- Staff well-being was valued and supported by the leadership team.

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 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 nurturing interactions from staff who were clearly passionate about their role. Staff worked effectively as a team, creating a friendly and welcoming environment. One parent told us, 'The sense of calm when you enter the setting is like no other'. Staff demonstrated mutual respect for each other and the children, which promoted a culture of kindness and in turn supported children to be respectful.

Staff demonstrated a strong commitment to working in partnership with families. Home visits were offered before children started to use the service. This supported the sharing of information and helped to build trusting relationships. A child-centred approach to settling in allowed children to transition at their own pace, which contributed to a positive start. Information gathered from families was used meaningfully to guide staff in providing personalised care and support.

Staff took time to engage with parents during settling in visits and discussed the content of personal plans to ensure these reflected each child's needs, routines and preferences. Personal plans were developed collaboratively and informed staff practice, contributing to continuity of care.

Throughout the year, the service engaged with families in a variety of ways, both formally and informally. Opportunities such as 'Raising Children with Confidence', Stay and Play sessions, Brew and a Blether, and seasonal walks in the local area provided meaningful ways for families to be involved in their child's nursery experience. Parents felt involved and told us, 'The nursery is very open to visits from parents and adults close to the children. Parents are invited to stay and play throughout the year and be involved in offering learning experiences for the children'.

Staff had planned further training to enhance how they supported families. One staff member had completed PEEP (Parents Early Education Partnership) training, and another planned to undertake it in the next academic year. This would support strong, positive relationships with families and contribute to children experiencing consistency between home and service, which would help further promote their wellbeing and development.

Children were encouraged to be independent and take ownership of aspects of their daily routines. They were involved in planning and preparing snack and mealtimes were used to support independence. A rolling snack system allowed children to decide when to eat, which promoted decision making. Lunch was served in smaller key worker groups to provide a calmer experience for children and allow for a sociable experience. However, on both days of the inspection, some children were observed eating without staff engagement or supervision. This was discussed with staff and management and steps have been taken to ensure that all children receive appropriate support and supervision when eating. Management should continue to monitor this.

Staff worked proactively with children and other professionals, for example, the Speech and language therapist (SALT) and the additional support needs (ASN) team and health visitors. This ensured that children received support tailored to their individual needs, supporting them to achieve their potential. While staff implemented a range of supportive strategies, further work was needed to ensure that these were

consistently recorded and shared across the team. This would ensure a consistent and positive approach, when responding to children. Staff training in the Hanen approach was planned to further support children's early language acquisition and communication.

Quality indicator 1.3 : Play and learning

Children experienced a range of play and learning opportunities which promoted engagement, curiosity and enjoyment. During the inspection, it was evident that children's experiences were closely linked to the quality of the environment and how well it was prepared.

On the first day of the inspection, the environment was not well resourced. Several key areas lacked materials or provocation to facilitate play, resulting in children being less engaged. Staff shared that this was due to a transition meeting for Primary 1, which had resulted in limited time for them to set up the room. On the second day of the inspection, the environment was much improved. All areas were well resourced and thoughtfully set up, creating a more engaging environment. As a result, children were calmer, more settled, and deeply involved in purposeful play. This illustrated the clear link between a well-prepared environment and positive outcomes for children. Currently, staff have 30 minutes before children arrive and two mornings allocated to set up, however, this was not always sufficient to ensure consistency. Staff were encouraged to reflect on this difference and recognised the need for consistent preparation time each day.

Children were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning, particularly when the environment supported choice and independence. A parent told us 'The staff are always looking out for the children's interests and developing learning tools/activities /play to match these'. While planned activities were offered, these were not always available for children to revisit, which limited opportunities for children to lead their own learning. The service recognised the need to consistently maintain a well-resourced environment and introduce an additional layer of open-ended and challenging materials to extend learning and support deeper exploration.

Staff supported children's emerging literacy through real-life opportunities, such as helping children to write lists of who was going to visit the Primary One Playzone. Children also used digital technology meaningfully, for example, checking the UV index on an iPad to decide whether sun cream was needed. This promoted independence and responsibility and children enjoyed recording this as part of their routine.

Learning around symmetry was evident, in outdoor play children used chalk to explore symmetry in their drawings. Indoors children used mirrors to create symmetrical pictures in the art area. One child explained, "Symmetry means it's the same on both sides", showing understanding and confidence in mathematical language.

Beach Kindergarten offered opportunities for nature-based learning. Children attended in small groups weekly, with sessions adapted to meet the needs of different learners. The walk to the beach formed part of the learning journey, with children following their own lines of enquiry. Robust risk assessments were in place. Staff observed high levels of engagement, enjoyment and emotional wellbeing during these experiences. A child excitedly shared, "We found unicorn shells on the beach. It was raining, and we sheltered in the big tent". Parents felt positive and told us 'Beach kindergarten has been amazing' and 'The use of the beach for learning is excellent'.

Children's voices were valued and captured through floor books and mind maps, supported by photographs and direct quotes. These resources allowed children to revisit and build on their learning. This combined with the responsive planning demonstrated how children were involved in their learning.

Children benefited from free-flow access to the outdoor garden, where they engaged with nature by planting and caring for vegetables, exploring insects, and enjoying sensory experiences like mixing potions in the mud kitchen and loose parts play. This rich outdoor environment supported children's curiosity, creativity and understanding of the natural world.

Parents commented 'Fantastic outdoor area which is set up with interesting, relevant play opportunities. It follows the children's interests and furthers their learning'.

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a welcoming and nurturing environment that was furnished to a high standard and provided a strong message that they mattered. The setting was bright and well ventilated, with natural light contributing to a calm and comfortable atmosphere. Ample space supported a range of play experiences, with areas for quiet, social, and active play, both indoors and outdoors.

On the second day of the inspection, learning spaces were thoughtfully arranged and reflected children's interests and curiosities. Resources and materials were accessible and appropriate, enabling children to engage in independent and purposeful play. Throughout the day, staff continued to develop the environment to ensure it consistently offered opportunities for learning across all areas.

Infection prevention and control procedures were robust. Staff consistently followed food safety and hygiene practices, contributing to a high level of safety and wellbeing for children. Regular cleaning and effective handwashing routines were embedded in daily practice. This contributed to a safe and hygienic space for children to play and learn.

Staff worked collaboratively to identify and reduce risks across the setting. Children were well supervised, and staff maintained accurate records of attendance. A whiteboard system was used to update the number of children present, supporting accountability and ensuring all children were accounted for throughout the session.

Risk assessments were in place and aligned with current national guidance. These included thorough checks of the indoor and outdoor environments. For example, the garden risk assessment covered all areas to minimise the risk of children leaving the premises unnoticed. A secure entry system further supported children's safety.

Outdoor learning was well supported through community walks and Beach Kindergarten sessions. Risk assessments for these off-site activities were robust, enabling children to safely participate in fun, challenging, and meaningful learning experiences in natural environments.

One area within the garden required attention. A concrete border, which remained following the removal of a large sandpit, presented a potential trip hazard. This was discussed with staff during the inspection. The local authority are currently trying to find a solution for this area.

Overall, children benefited from high-quality facilities that supported their wellbeing, safety, and learning.

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.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Leaders promoted and sustained a shared vision for the setting. The vision, values, and aims of the service were due to be reviewed with children, families and staff to ensure that they reflected the current needs and continued to be meaningful to all. This collaborative process would support everyone in working towards common goals that promoted positive outcomes for children.

The improvement priorities for the year, were evident in practice. For example, ensuring that children's voices were meaningfully captured, and improving learning with technology.

There was a strong culture of self-evaluation, with staff fully involved in reflecting on and developing the quality of the service. Weekly staff meetings provided regular opportunities for professional dialogue and staff described these as valuable times for reflection, learning, and planning improvements.

The service communicated well with families. Weekly newsletters kept parents informed and included a 'question of the month' to encourage ongoing feedback. This supported effective partnership working and ensured that parents' views were heard and valued. Feedback was actively sought following events and other engagement opportunities, and actions taken were clearly communicated. Parents confirmed this, telling us, 'We feel very much a part of the Towerbank nursery community and have lots of opportunities to be involved - stay and play sessions, brew and bethers and the question of the week are all ways we can be involved and give our views', and 'The parents are regularly consulted on the service their child receives'. This helped to build trust and a sense of shared responsibility for the quality of the service.

Strong and supportive leadership enabled staff to have high aspirations for themselves and children in their care. Staff described the leadership team as approachable, nurturing, and committed to staff development. Leaders promoted a learning culture where staff felt confident to try new approaches and reflect on their impact. Staff were confident in their roles and took responsibility for continuous improvement. They discussed the professional reading they engaged in, such as meaningful participation, the child's voice and the use of Floorbooks, and how this had supported improvement in practice and outcomes for children. They recognised the importance of reflective practice and used this to make positive changes to children's experiences. Staff valued the time they had for reflection and self-evaluation and were empowered to contribute meaningfully to the development of the setting.

Staff wellbeing was a clear priority. Leaders worked in partnership with staff to co-develop a Health and Wellbeing Policy that was both supportive and personalised. Staff felt valued, and this contributed to a positive team ethos. They described strong relationships with one another and with leaders, resulting in a cohesive and motivated team.

We discussed that not all notifications were being made to the Care Inspectorate or other relevant services. The leadership team had begun to address this by the time of feedback. We signposted them to the new notifications guidance, to support them to make the necessary notifications.

We saw that not all medication was recorded as found on the dispensing label. If there is any difference between the dosage instruction from parents and that found on the dispensing label, the service should seek advice from the child's local pharmacist or GP's surgery as soon as possible. This would support

children's health, welfare and safety. The service agreed to do this and going forward include this in their quality assurance of medication.

Staff and the leadership team were engaged and responsive throughout the inspection process, demonstrating their commitment to improving outcomes for children.

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

Leaders demonstrated a clear understanding of the importance of appropriate staffing to ensure children's needs were met. Effective use was made of the skills, experience, and interests across the staff team. Staff were deployed in a way that supported positive outcomes for children, contributing to a calm and nurturing environment. However, at times throughout the day, such as lunchtime, children were not always supported by staff. This practice had now been reviewed to ensure that children were appropriately supported at lunchtime.

Staff were supported to access professional learning based on both their interests and the needs of children and families. This had a positive impact on outcomes for children. For example, staff delivered the Raising Children with Confidence course for parents, who shared how this had enhanced their approach to parenting and strengthened family relationships.

The senior leadership team recognised the need for high levels of adult interaction and presence to promote children's wellbeing and safety. Staff breaks were planned carefully to minimise disruption, while still ensuring staff were able to rest and return refreshed. Staff described the senior leadership team as supportive and responsive to their needs, which contributed to a positive team culture and staff wellbeing.

Staff communicated effectively with one another throughout the day. When a task required a member of staff to leave the playroom, this was communicated clearly to colleagues to ensure children remained appropriately supported and supervised.

Continuity of care was well considered. Effective systems were in place to support children and families through transitions and periods of staff absence. Parents commented positively on the continuity of care provided when a key staff member was off on long-term leave. They shared that the communication from the senior leadership team was strong and that they felt supported and reassured, with no negative impact on their child's experience.

Staffing arrangements were flexible and responsive to the changing needs of children. Leaders ensured that staffing levels remained in line with guidance and adjusted these when required. Staff knew children well and were able to respond quickly and sensitively to support their wellbeing, play and learning. Staff told us that the positive relationships they had with children and families was of the highest importance to them. Parents spoke highly of staff, telling us, 'Staff engage with children and parents. I feel I could talk to any of the nursery staff about my child, it doesn't have to be his key worker', 'Staff are always available to talk to us if we need it. They are responsive to queries and are open to us visiting and spending time in the nursery', and 'As a parent, I know the key people taking care of my child, they are approachable,

experienced, open and proactive'. This demonstrated the positive impact staff relationships with parents had on outcomes 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?	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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.