

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

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 November 2022

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002576

Service no:
CS2019378452

About the service

St Cuthbert's Primary School Nursery is a daycare of children service situated within the city of Edinburgh. 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 nursery is based in a standalone unit within the school grounds. The children have access to an enclosed outdoor play space to the rear of the building. There are shops, schools, parks, public transport links and other amenities in the local area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 1 November 2022 between the hours of 09:15 and 15:45. 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 12 people using the service and 10 of their families.
- spoke with 11 members of staff and management.
- observed practice and daily life.
- reviewed documents.
- consulted with two visiting professionals.

Key messages

All staff were welcoming, kind and caring. They knew the individual care and support needs of children and families well.

Lunchtimes had been reviewed to create a more sociable, relaxed experience for children. This should continue to be monitored.

Good opportunities for play and learning were provided. The environment enabled child-led, free flow play indoors and when outdoors. This could be enhanced by continuing to explore the possibility of free flow access between the indoors and outdoors.

There should be more effective use of the different experience, knowledge and skills of the staff team when there is staff absence. This is to ensure children experience positive, high quality experiences in all areas across the day.

The management and staff team worked well together. They have built a strong foundation and have self-evaluation and improvement plans in place to lead to continuous 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.

1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff were kind, caring and nurturing towards children in their care. Use of praise, support and the introduction of Makaton, which is a communication tool using speech, symbols and signs supported children in their care and play. Families told us, 'The staff welcome me and my child every day with a smile. My child is very happy to go in each day.'

Staff knew children's individual care and support needs well and personal plans were in place for all children as required. However, some information we sampled within the 'all about me' sections were not up-to-date. We have advised that all personal plans are reviewed and updated with children and families in line with legislation. This will ensure personal plans are a current reflection of each child's care, support and wellbeing needs. (See Area for Improvement 1).

The service worked closely with families and other professionals to identify appropriate next steps for children with individual strategies for support. One professional told us, 'Advice and training has always been sought, welcomed and put in place by staff and management. I have observed this being followed during my visits.'

When supporting children with personal care such as nappy changing, staff were sensitive and spoke gently with children asking them if they wanted their nappy changed. Children's views were respected which made this a calm, natural experience for children and created positive, trusting relationships between children and staff.

Lunchtime had recently been reviewed to take account of children's attendance patterns, preferences and needs. A rolling lunch had then been introduced. This meant there were smaller groups of children eating together at the one time which created a more relaxed dining experience for children. Children served themselves and poured their own drinks from well presented, healthy options, supported by staff as required. To improve further, staff should ensure they are seated alongside children as they eat and be more mindful of children who demonstrated they would like to join the first sitting. Children could access fresh drinking water both indoors and outdoors throughout the session.

Vegetables and fruit were grown in the nursery garden. We saw how children had been actively included in the planting, growing, picking and preparing of apples recently. These experiences offered various learning opportunities such as counting, measuring and baking and had been shared with families through newsletters and learning journals. Children's experiences were transferred to imaginative play on the day of the inspection when children told us, 'I am making more apple pie,' and 'We are making cherry pie. It's yummy,' while playing with playdough.

Medication was stored safely within the playroom. This ensured it was easily accessible to staff if required. We advised where some key information was missing on one form we sampled. This was amended immediately to support children's health, safety and wellbeing.

1.3: Play and learning

Children were involved in leading their own play both indoors and outdoors together with a balance of planned experiences which promoted children's choice and independence. Examples included a group of children who had lots of fun and laughter while actively playing outdoors using water, glitter, bubbles and loose parts resources to create potions in the mud kitchen area. This led to rich imaginative play. Following observations, discussions and effective use of questioning, another child's interest in snakes was positively recognised and supported by staff across the day using a variety of resources and technology to meet and research their interest further.

Children had recently undertaken activities to celebrate the festival of Diwali. Celebrating festivals, children's life experiences and interests create positive connections to their own and wider communities. We shared examples of where resources and the nursery environment could be further developed to support and extend children's play and learning opportunities and celebrate diversity.

Although the majority of children were happy and engaged in activities over the course of the day, there were also some missed opportunities to fully support children's creativity, respond to their interests, ensure their safety when using resources and extend their play and learning. Examples were discussed with the management team in full. (See Area for Improvement 2).

(also see Area for Improvement 1 under 'How good is our staff team').

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure all information for children is current, personal plans should be reviewed and updated with children and families at least once every six months, or sooner if requested or required. This is in line with legislation.

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

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices.' (HSCS 1.15)

2. To ensure all children can take part in high quality, child-led play and learning experiences during all sessions, management and staff should ensure all staff are aware of and follow current child development, theory and practice.

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

'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials.' (HSCS 1.31).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with Scottish Government document, Realising the ambition: Being Me: national practice guidance for early years in Scotland.

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The service was warm and welcoming for children. The main door, playroom doors and gates around the outdoor area had additional closures in place to ensure children's safety. However, due to the type of building and fire door in place, children did not have free flow access from the playroom to the outdoor area. We asked the service to explore this further with the local authority and fire services department to determine whether this access door could be used more flexibly. Having this door open for much of the session would mean children could access each area independently.

There was sufficient space for children to play both indoors and outdoors and a variety of resources to support their learning. Resources were varied and in good condition to stimulate children's natural curiosity, learning and creativity. Further consideration should be given to the layout of the playroom to ensure there were sufficient quiet areas for children to rest and relax and that children could access art and craft materials such as paints more freely. We advised that block play storage and woodworking resources were monitored to ensure children's safety.

Infection prevention and control and food safety practices were followed by staff and children to ensure children's health and safety. Effective hand hygiene practices should continue to be promoted at all key times throughout the day.

Although children could access the children's toilets independently from the playroom, we saw that the main doors to this area were quite heavy for some children to manage. We advised the service to liaise with the local authority to explore the possibility of replacing these with more lightweight doors. This would enable children to open and close the doors with ease.

Children's personal plans were stored confidentially and securely. This included having the appropriate systems in place to manage electronic information. After discussions, the management team agreed to review where the keys to locked files were kept. This was particularly important when other services were using a shared office space.

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

There was a shared vision, values and aims for the service. A variety of communication methods were in place to suit families needs and preferences. This included newsletters, noticeboards indoors and outdoors, emails and online communication. Families had been included in reviews of policies and consultations to influence change within the service.

A current policy of the month was displayed for feedback from families and a recent survey about the overall service provision and families experiences was in the process of being audited. The outcomes of this and the actions planned in response to parental views were to be fed back to families in clear, meaningful ways, both written and pictorial.

One parent told us, 'We are always asked our views and opinions. I couldn't praise them enough. Relationships are key and I can see that all staff and the headteacher know the children well. With less Covid-19 restrictions we have now all been invited in. It's great to feel more involved.'

There was a stable, motivated and committed management team in place who shared high aspirations to support families and their children to reach their full potential. The service improvement plan demonstrated key areas for development and good support was in place from the local authority to assist with this. Regular staff meetings and distributed leadership had ensured all staff were included in the overall service development. We spoke with staff who told us, 'We are all really enthusiastic and help each other. We are a diverse staff team and can share our knowledge, skills and experience with each other, while also learning from others. We are always asked our views and opinions and share training we have been on with other members of staff. That helps all of us learn and progress.' and 'We discuss improvements and self-evaluation at staff meetings. It's really inclusive and I feel that everyone here is valued. Building on improving our relationships with families is one of the main areas we are working on and we can see the value of that already.'

We recognised that self-evaluation and monitoring processes were in the early stages. These should be developed further to ensure more robust plans were in place. This would support a programme of continuous improvement. We shared an example of playroom monitoring to assess the quality of play and learning and children's access to resources and areas. We signposted the service to The Hub section of the Care Inspectorate website to support their improvement journey.

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.

4.3: Staff deployment

There were a sufficient number of staff in place to meet the numbers of children in attendance on the day of inspection. A keyworker system was in place, with a second named person in the event of staff absence. New members of staff were introduced to families and children and the staff team's photographs and names were displayed within the cloakroom area as a reminder. This informed parents and visitors to the service. Team leaders who were familiar to the children covered staff absences on the day of the inspection. This contributed towards children feeling safe and secure.

The staff team were observed to work well together, supporting each other where required. There was a mentoring system in place where more experienced members of staff supported trainees or new members of staff. Staff comments included, 'I love being a mentor.'

It is so rewarding being able to support others with my knowledge and using my past experiences,' and 'Having a mentor helps me feel more confident because I have someone to go to who can always support me.'

Staff communicated to each other when leaving an area or a room and shared the numbers of children playing indoors and outdoors. This contributed to children's safety. However, more consideration should have been given to the deployment of staff throughout the day to ensure positive outcomes for all children. This should have taken account of the skills mix of the staff team, the routines and activities of the day and where individual members of staff were deployed to be most effective within the playroom. (See Area for Improvement 1).

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's wellbeing, learning and development and to provide high quality outcomes for children, the manager should ensure that staff are deployed effectively throughout the day to cover planned and unplanned absences.

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

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.' (HSCS 3.14)

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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