Mount Esk Nursery School
Day Care of Children

Dalhousie Gardens
Bonnyrigg
EH19 2LS

Telephone: 0131 663 2364

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 21 November 2016

Service provided by: Midlothian Council
Service provider number: SP2003002602

Care service number: CS2003015999
About the service

Mount Esk Nursery School is situated in the village of Bonnyrigg in Midlothian. The purpose built nursery consists of two large playrooms, enclosed gardens which can be accessed directly, kitchen, toilets, office and staff space.

The nursery is registered to provide a service to a maximum of 60 children per session aged for 23 years to entry into primary school.

The services aims included the following:
“To provide a happy, safe and attractive environment in which everyone is made welcome.
To offer the best educational opportunities for every child.
To recognise the value of parents, family and community to work together and support each other.”

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of children receiving a care service. We want to ensure that they have the best start in life, are ready to succeed and live longer, healthier lives.

We check that services are meeting the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (also known as GIRFEC). Set up by the Scottish Government GIRFEC is a national approach to working in a consistent way with all children and young people. It is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. The approach helps services focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people - and what they can do to improve. GIRFEC is being woven into all policy, procedure, strategy and legislation that affect children, young people and their families.

There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC. They are often known as the SHANARRI indicators. We use the indicators at inspection to assess how services are making a positive difference for children.

What people told us

We spent time talking to, playing with and observing children. The children appeared confident and well settled in the care of staff. Several children were happy to chat to us about their nursery and the things they enjoyed most. Comments included “I’m making a card for my Mum, I can do something special every day if I want to.” “I make new games with my best friend and we practice them in the garden” and “I like jumping in the puddles but you should really wear your wellies for that.”

All of the parents who returned our questionnaires told us they agreed or strongly agreed that overall they were happy with the quality of care their child received in the service. They talked positively about communication with parents, opportunities for parents to be involved in the service, skills of the staff in meeting their children’s needs and the overall quality of resources. We also spoke to parents as they picked up and dropped off their children. Comments were also made about the frequency of formal meetings and staff turnover. Individual comments included:

“I’ve had two children at the nursery and we’re very happy with the service. There have been changes of staff but that’s to be expected and I don’t think it’s affected the quality.”

“The nursery is very busy at drop off and pick up but I’ve always been able to find someone to talk to if I’ve needed it. Although it’s busy I’ve never felt rushed by staff; they are interested in what I have to say.”

“My child has communication issues, I couldn’t be happier with the excellent care my child receives from staff.”

“I have appreciated staff’s willingness and perseverance in helping my child to settle at nursery - Skillfully involving them in activities and ‘helping’ tasks when they were reluctant for me to leave.”
“Parents are very much involved in the form of helping with outings, library, gala day and also through the Friends of Mount Esk Nursery Group. We get lots of info about the nursery aims and progress and we also put our views and point across.”

All of the comments we received were shared with the Head Teacher.

**Self assessment**

Before the inspection took place we received a fully completed self evaluation document. We were satisfied with the information contained in the document which identified areas of strength and areas for future development.

**From this inspection we graded this service as:**

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of care and support</td>
<td>6 - Excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of staffing</td>
<td>5 - Very Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership</td>
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**What the service does well**

A key strength of the nursery was the quality of pastoral care given to families. Every child had a pastoral care folder based on the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators. Staff understood the particular importance of nurturing children, building confidence and social skills so that they were ready to take advantage of the rich learning environment of the nursery. This included opportunities to be active, explore, experiment, negotiate, problem solve and be creative. We saw several examples of exceptional care being given to individual children and their families which supported their overall wellbeing, helped them to be active learners and valued members of the school community.

There was a clear understanding of the role of transitions in ensuring children were confident, ready to explore and learn from their environment. Work on the move to primary one took account of this and staff went to considerable lengths to support children and their families at this critical point in their learning careers. Positive links had been made with local primary schools so that transitions could be tailored to individual needs.

Despite some recent changes the staff team worked well together. They were aware of one another’s skills and shared the common goal of supporting children to reach their potential through the high quality activities and experiences they planned and supported.

Staff were positive about the range training opportunities available to them. They included in service training and attending external courses. This had led to the development of a confident staff team who were aware of best practice document and able to describe how they used their knowledge and understanding to be responsive in supporting children’s individual needs.

We saw examples of skilled staff who knew when to step in and support children’s play with questions which helped them think, problem solve and move on in their learning and when to allow children space to think things through for themselves.
We asked a sample of staff about their understanding of their responsibility to protect the children in their care. We found that their training in child protection allowed them to answer our questions clearly and confidently. This reassured us that any action required to keep children safe would be taken.

What the service could do better

We looked at a sample of children’s “All About Me” folders and saw examples of clear observations of children’s progress. However there were gaps in identifying next steps in children’s learning. We discussed this with the Head Teacher who agreed with our observations and told us of her plans to support staff in this area. We will follow this up at the next inspection.

We talked to the Head Teacher about the potential benefits to children if they were able to go straight to the outdoor play area from the moment they came into nursery. The Head Teacher was aware of this and had started to discuss this with staff. We will monitor this at the next inspection.

We asked the Head Teacher to look at the use of group time and how it was meeting the needs of all of the children. We will monitor this at the next inspection.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Inspection and grading history

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<th>Type</th>
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<th>Staffing</th>
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<td>Management and leadership 6 - Excellent</td>
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Care Inspectorate
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