

The City Nursery Day Care of Children

47 Greenbank Drive
Edinburgh
EH10 5SA

Telephone: 0131 446 0088

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 29 January 2018

Service provided by:
Links Nurseries Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2007009491

Care service number:
CS2009229782

About the service

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

The City Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 143 children aged birth to five years of whom no more than 30 children aged 24 months to under three years are accommodated at 47 Greenbank Drive, Edinburgh, EH10 5SA and a maximum of 57 children aged birth - 28 months are accommodated at 2a Rattray Drive, Edinburgh, EH10 5TH. Both services are within walking distance of each other.

The service operates from properties in a residential part of Edinburgh close to bus routes and local amenities. The service accommodation includes various playrooms and all children have access to garden spaces. The service works in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Children and Families Department to provide pre-school education for children between the ages of three and school entry. Aims of the service include to promote development and stimulus through activities and opportunities for learning based on the principles set down in the pre-birth to three curriculum and the curriculum for excellence.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC). This is Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with the services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC. They are: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

We are carrying out a pilot using the Short Observational Framework for Inspection (SOFI 2) tool. The tool supports inspectors to carry out focussed observations of children's experiences while at nursery. We carried out a SOFI 2 observation as part of this inspection which has informed our findings. The findings are threaded throughout the report.

What people told us

We spent time with children in all rooms during our visits. We interacted with children and observed their experiences. This allowed us to assess the quality of their experiences. Some children were happy to speak with us or tell us about what they were doing, their comments included:

'We're building a new house. Friends I need your help.'

'I'm building a hospital. My doggie is lost. He is not feeling well. He's in the hospital.'

'We're going to be painting small, medium and big - red, blue and green circles.'

'I can smell pasta for lunch today. It's my favourite. I like spaghetti, raisins, yoghurt. Yummy. I don't like soup.'

'We play, eat, go out in the garden, have lunch, play and eat again.'

'I like drawing, painting and reading and playing with friends, toys and Lego.'

'We choose areas to play in. We were learning about Jack Frost for our display. We were learning the story. We all had to do hand and foot prints in white paint to make snow men.'

'Look I drew my mummy, my daddy and my granddad.'

'We did a nativity and put costumes on. We three were the kings. There were shepherds and we were singing Jingle Bells and We Wish You a Merry Christmas.'

'Making an ambulance, red, blue, black, play dough, like a police car.'

We sent 32 Care Standards Questionnaires to the service to give to parents before our inspection. We received 14 completed questionnaires before the inspection took place. All parents indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of care their child received in this service. We have included some of the parent's comments below which represent their views:

'My only constructive feedback is I would like to see more trips and outside nursery activities planned.'

'My child has attended for some time. We have been very pleased with the care my child has received.'

'My child started here after we moved house to Edinburgh. The nursery staff managed the transition very well. We were impressed with the level of communication, professionalism and caring nature they showed to us all during this time. My child is now completely settled and loves going to the nursery where she is thriving.'

'My daughter attends and my sons attended until he went to primary school. My children were nurtured and supported at all times by the staff and built up really good relationships. I love that we are kept informed of our children's progress through an e-journal system. This provides a great platform for two-way communication between nursery and home.'

'This is my child's second nursery. His experience here has shown me the high standard of care and stimulating environment he has.'

'We have been here a year and have been impressed with the nursery. The building and layout is clean and well laid out. I find the space welcoming and comfortable for the children.'

Self assessment

We did not request a self assessment in advance of this inspection. We viewed the service's own internal improvement plan.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	3 - Adequate
Quality of environment	3 - Adequate
Quality of staffing	3 - Adequate
Quality of management and leadership	3 - Adequate

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Staff provided praise and encouragement to children throughout the day and used positive language. This helped to encourage the children's resilience to try again with tasks and skills which may have been difficult at first. It also contributed to their confidence which would build their self-esteem.

Staff acknowledged upset children or picked them up, however this was sometimes brief. Staff were sensitive to new children and were understanding if they were unsettled throughout the day. Staff should be more aware of younger and non-verbal children's attempts to communicate or signal that they need support. This would better ensure their emotional needs were met.

Parents and carers gave favourable comments about the quality of care and support that they and their children got from the nursery. One told us how the team had supported them to overcome some difficulties and were grateful for this assistance.

Care plans were in place for all children which helped to ensure their initial health and wellbeing needs were met. We reminded the provider that these must be updated every six months, show engagement with parents and be signed and dated.

Play dates to other rooms helped to support children's transitions. These contributed to children's feelings of security as they visited with a trusted adult and helped to ensure their individual needs continued to be met. Staff must be aware of how they deploy themselves when staff leave on a half day to ensure that children remain in the playroom they are familiar with. This will promote the best possible care, meet the emotional needs of children and respect the attachments they had made rather than just focussing on meeting the staff ratios required for the service.

Healthy eating was promoted and there was a good range and variety of home cooked meals and snacks provided. We saw examples in the dragonfly room at snack time where children were able to make choices and independently select their foods. However there was significant room for improvement to enhance children's meal experiences across the whole nursery. In particular children's independence and staff interactions with children should be improved. See recommendation one.

Most children were generally happy and confident. They appeared relaxed in the company of each other and the adults in the buildings. Children had opportunities to share, play together and take turns. As a result they were able to make friendships and feel included. Looking at children's experiences and progress within the e-journals we found that improvements were needed in how staff identified, assessed and planned for children's individual learning and progression. Some observations were not individual to the child; some were identical to others and most were not evaluative to show children's individual progress. See recommendation two.

Some children had opportunities for self-directed play in the available outdoor areas and a few went out walking in the community. Access to fresh air, physical and active play would positively impact of the health and wellbeing of these children.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. The provider should ensure lunch time experiences for children are reviewed and enhanced to be more nurturing and flexible to meet children's needs. Attention should be given to the following areas:

- The process to indicate allergies and dietary needs through use of photographic cards should be reviewed. To ensure an easier and homely strategy for children which still ensures their health.
- Children should not be contained or kept seated whilst waiting for lunch. They should be seated when lunch arrives.
- Children's rights should be respected and they should be able to leave the lunch table when they or their own table have finished and not be expected to wait for a very large group to finish together.
- Staff should interact, sit with children, engage them in conversation and even eat with them.
- All foods should be served on a plate or in a bowl.
- Children should be encouraged to be independent according to their stage of development. They could begin to feed themselves, select foods, pour drinks and prepare foods dependent on their capabilities.

Making these changes would enhance the meal times for children; encourage conversations and socialising; show children respect and ensure hygienic procedures to compliment their health. It would also help children to become independent, eat at a pace that suits them and develop skills for life.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 3, Health and Wellbeing, Standard 5, Quality of Experience, Standard 14, Well-managed Service, Standard 12, Confidence in Staff.

2. The provider should support all staff and management to increase their knowledge and skills to better identify, log and consider the individual learning and development of each child. Observations should demonstrate the child's progress and where relevant appropriate next steps should be planned. Management should assure the recording of children's learning experiences and outcomes is clear, of a high quality, meaningful and evaluated well. This will help to ensure children are appropriately supported to challenge themselves and reach their full potential.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 5, Quality of Experience, Standard 14, Well-managed Service, Standard 12, Confidence in Staff.

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

The overall environment was mainly pleasant, warm, well-ventilated and tidy. Parents and carers we spoke with agreed with this. All playrooms had large windows mostly at child height and the playrooms were of a good size and bright.

The outdoor classroom was an additional space for some quieter or small group experiences for preschool children. It had heating and soft cushions for children to sit on which created a comfortable and enjoyable environment.

There were some changes to the layout and use of some rooms since the last inspection for example Caterpillar room '2' was now in use. Improvements were needed in the play environments for all children but in particular, children under three years old. Most children did not have appropriate opportunities to reach their full potential through exploration, curiosity and creativity within a challenging and stimulating early learning environment. See recommendation one.

Appropriate procedures were carried out by staff for nappy changing. This helped with infection control and contributed to the children's health. However we did identify some safety and infection control issues including an uncovered radiator which children could touch in the hallway of the younger building; storage of children's dummies and an unclear maintenance recording system for staff. See recommendation two.

Children's art work and photographs allowed them to share their efforts with their family and feel a sense of pride. Some children who took part in art activities or moved around messy play areas enjoyed the opportunity to feel different textures and use different materials such as glue.

Local areas were being used for some children to have planned walks. This gave them an opportunity to feel a sense of belonging and become knowledgeable about the area, although increased time outdoors could be extended more frequently to all children.

All children had a peg area, box or bag which allowed them to bring certain home comforts into nursery with them. This supported the children to feel comfortable and secure.

Although children's art work was displayed we noted that it was often adult directed which stifled the children's creativity and in some cases inappropriate for the age of the children, for instance Robert Burns poetry in the baby room.

There were quiet rooms and areas for children to either sleep or take part in some quiet activities. This would contribute to their feelings of wellbeing as they were able to relax and rest.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. The provider should ensure the play and learning environment for children is improved to be more reflective of, and responsive to, children's needs and interests. This may include:

- Consideration of the spaces used for children under three including layout.
- Systems to allow children access to the outdoor play areas more responsively.
- Consideration of children's individual needs.
- An increased understanding of how to recognise the wishes of non-verbal children.
- Increased provision of core and varied resources to stimulate children's senses.
- Increased provision for heuristic, open-ended, natural, real life and creative play.
- Increase in quality and quantity of play resources to enable children to create and play cooperatively.
- An increased understanding of child development.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 5, Quality of Experience, Standard 11, Access to Resources.

2. The provider should ensure the following issues are rectified to ensure children health and safety:

- Ensure hall and walk way radiators that children pass are covered to prevent them getting burnt.
- Butterflies toilet seats should be replaced and fixed where needed.
- System in place to ensure regular flushing of covered toilet does take place.
- The large, heavy wooden board to block off WC is not attached to anything and so should be fixed securely (Butterflies room).
- Management of dummies - these should be in small sealed tubs, not open to the air.

- Travel cots should be cleaned regularly and checked for any rips to mattress or netting.
- Mud area out-of-bounds, should be restored.
- Maintenance request sheets do not seek date the request was made. This makes it difficult to see how long it has taken for repairs to be made.
- Health and safety issues should be standing agenda at every team meeting.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 2, A Safe Environment.

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

The team were mostly enthusiastic, motivated, willing to learn and had the children's best interests at heart. We were encouraged by staff's responsiveness to our suggestions, which demonstrated a willingness to work with us.

Staff were approachable and able to speak with parents to give them information about their child's day when they arrived to collect them. Overall there were positive relationships between staff and children and their parents. There had been some changes to the staff team and posts since the last inspection. We agreed the management team's goal to solidify the team to retain staff and provide more consistency for the children was required.

Staff interactions were intended to be caring and helpful and they were keen to engage with children. They were able to tell us about the children in their care and were knowledgeable about their healthcare needs and individual support needs. For example, discussing children's usual sleep patterns in case this was why they were upset. However staff knowledge of individual children's progress in learning and how they would support children's development through well-planned activities was not evident. Group planning based on activities rather than learning experiences resulted in a singular and limited approach to planning children's experiences, interactions and supporting learning through play. This approach did not support children to reach their full potential. See recommendation one.

Some staff had attended some core training and regular team meetings enabled the whole team to come together to discuss their work and how the service would move forward. We made two recommendations at our last inspection that staff further familiarise themselves with national policy and best practice guidance to enhance their practice and build their leadership skills. The evidence found at this inspection through observations of children's experiences and discussions with staff confirmed that this has not yet been achieved. See recommendations two and three.

Staff we spoke to who happened to be new agreed that they had felt welcomed in their playroom and worked well with their team who were supportive. Viewing the services' recruitment procedures we found the system to store information was not always consistent; some procedures were not carried out on time; telephone references were not always backed up in paper form; staff were emailed documents and policies to read with no system in place to check their understanding and some staff had been with the company for six months and had not completed basic core training courses. See recommendation four.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 4

1. We recommend the provider supports staff to further develop their interactions with all children, particularly those under three, to help them achieve their full potential. Specifically, staff should be supported to:

- Consider how they interact with children to meet their emotional wellbeing needs and stage of development.
- Consider how they can challenge children's thinking and extend their learning in their interactions with children.
- Respect children's choice and reduce interruptions to their play.
- Use best practice documents such as Building the Ambition, Pre-birth to Three curriculum and How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare in order to support them in planning appropriate and effective experiences for children.
- Enhance their knowledge of the benefits of self-directed and prolonged play and how this links with early childhood development.

This will enhance opportunities for children to reach their full potential at every stage of their development.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 4, Engaging with Children, Standard 12, Confidence in Staff, Standard 5, Quality of Experience, Standard 14, Well-managed Service.

2. We recommend the provider supports staff to update their knowledge and further familiarise themselves with national strategies and policies that should inform their practice. This includes the National Care Standards, Building the Ambition, and Getting it Right for Every Child and the role of the named person.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 3, Health and Wellbeing, Standard 12, Confidence in Staff, Standard 5, Quality of Experience, Standard 14, Well-managed Service.

3. We recommended the manager further promote leadership skills at all levels within the workforce by using the Scottish Social Services Council's Step into Leadership pathway online resource. Staff should now access and use this resource to support improved outcomes for children and their own professional practice. More information can be found at URL: <http://www.stepintoleadership.info/>.

They should also ensure that staff leadership opportunities are increased in the service. This would help staff to focus on key areas, share best practice and, as a result, promote further positive outcomes for children.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16, Standard 13, Improving the Service, Standard 14, Well-managed Service, Standard 12, Confidence in Staff.

4. We recommend the provider ensures the recruitment, induction and mentoring system is improved to make sure it is more robust and consistent. This should include:

- To follow timescales and procedures for all employees (follow-up telephone references and complete induction on time).
- Induction process for new staff members should be more robust .
- A designated room mentor should be formally arranged to guide staff in best practice.
- Professional development should take into account different levels of staff knowledge and experience, it should be tailored to meet the staff needs and nurture them into becoming more confident and skilled.
- The service should check that any agency staff used have a relevant PVG number and issue date.

This will help to ensure staff are fit to practice and help ensure the health, wellbeing and protection of children within the service.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 12, Confidence in Staff.

Grade: 3 – adequate

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

The experienced manager was visible and approachable. This made it easy for staff and parents to speak with her and discuss any queries. The manager and deputies were around and gave help, advice and assistance to staff during our visit. We found that more consistent and thorough monitoring of staff practice was needed. This should focus on quality of staff interactions and children's experiences. See recommendation one.

There have been some career development opportunities for staff within the service. This has recognised the skills of these staff and given them an opportunity to have more experience of leading a team or mentoring newer staff. The current system of emailing staff to inform them of best practice documents and to enhance their knowledge was not effective. This needed to be reviewed. See recommendation one.

A development plan was in place for the service, this was shared with the local authority. It highlighted some key areas for improvement and could be adapted to suit the needs of the service. Further plans should be made to work on the areas for development we found at this inspection and to reduce unnecessary paperwork which doesn't have an impact on children's care, support or experiences. Also consideration should be given to supporting the team to streamline their planning and to make it more responsive and led by children. See recommendation one.

The management team have been working on recruiting and settling staff. Staff we spoke with did say they felt they could approach management to ask any questions or to solve problems. The management team come together each day to discuss the service as a whole. This helped to promote knowledge of children, families and staff's progress in both buildings which contributed to a shared leadership approach.

Members of the management team are attending local authority cluster meetings. These provide opportunities for wider professional dialogue, peer support, opportunities to seek guidance from the council and to share what their service was working on. We advised the management of services the team could visit to promote good practice. We also initiated contact with the quality improvement officer in the council to aid the service in improving the areas for development detailed throughout this report.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. We recommend the provider ensures the overall quality assurance system is effective in ensuring a high quality service for children. This could include:

- Peer review systems could be introduced in the future to support staff in their development and practice.
- Monitoring of staff practice and children's experiences to improve outcomes for children.
- Monitoring of the learning environment and quality and quantity of resources.
- Visits to other settings to allow staff to observe high quality practice and discuss findings and a way forward.
- Achievable tasks to support meaningful change and consistency.
- Management need to consider systems in place for managing e-journals where the focus is quality and giving a real sense of each child's progress.
- Effective methods of updating knowledge of best practice and using these within their work were needed.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standards 13, Improving the Service and Standard 14, Well-managed Service.

Grade: 3 – adequate

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

We recommend that staff update and familiarise themselves with national strategies and policies that should inform their practice. This includes the National Care Standards, Building the Ambition, and Getting it Right for Every Child and the role of the named person.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 3, Health and Wellbeing, Standard 12, Confidence in Staff, Standard 5, Quality of Experience, Standard 14, Well-managed Service.

This recommendation was made on 18 December 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Practice we observed confirmed that all staff did not have appropriate knowledge of and were not working in line these documents. We also informed the manager that staff needed to become familiar with child protection, whistle blowing procedures and the principles of GIRFEC, including who the named person was. The provider should continue to work on this recommendation. See Quality of Staffing.

Recommendation 2

We recommended the manager further promote leadership skills at all levels within the workforce by using the Scottish Social Services Council's Step into Leadership pathway online resource. Staff should now access and use this resource to support improved outcomes for children and their own professional practice. More information can be found at URL: <http://www.stepintoleadership.info/>.

They should also ensure that staff leadership opportunities are increased in the service. This would help staff to focus on key areas, share best practice and, as a result, promote further positive outcomes for children.

National Care Standards, Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 13, Improving the Service, Standard 14, Well-managed Service, Standard 12, Confidence in Staff.

This recommendation was made on 18 December 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Changes and additions in staff team have meant that current leadership opportunities were primarily with the management and room supervisors. The provider should continue to work on this recommendation. See quality of staffing.

Complaints

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

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
19 Nov 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	4 - Good
3 Feb 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
1 May 2013	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
12 Jul 2012	Unannounced	Care and support	3 - Adequate
		Environment	2 - Weak
		Staffing	2 - Weak
		Management and leadership	2 - Weak
22 Nov 2011	Unannounced	Care and support	3 - Adequate
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	3 - Adequate
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
16 Nov 2010	Unannounced	Care and support	Not assessed
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	Not assessed
28 Jan 2010	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	Not assessed

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