

# Edinburgh Montessori Arts School Day Care of Children

Tower Mains Studio  
Mill House  
18N Liberton Brae  
Edinburgh  
EH16 6AE

Telephone: 01316 000 123

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
15 March 2022

**Service provided by:**  
Emma Rattigan

**Service provider number:**  
SP2006008332

**Service no:**  
CS2006121072

## About the service

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

Edinburgh Montessori Arts School is provided by Emma Rattigan and is located in the Liberton area of Edinburgh. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 65 children aged one year to those not yet attending primary school of whom a maximum of 10 children are aged one to two years. The accommodation is provided over two floors. On the ground floor there is the kitchen, office space and two playrooms known as Downstairs Children's House and the Infant Community which both have direct access to an enclosed garden. On the first floor there is a further room known as Upstairs Children's House, toilet facilities and a studio for additional activities including the out of school care service. The adjacent paddock is also used for outdoor play in the afternoons on a daily basis.

We carried out an unannounced inspection of this service on Tuesday 8 March 2022 which continued on a virtual basis on 10th and 14th March. Feedback was given to the manager and provider throughout the inspection and formally on 15 March.

The aims of the school as stated are:-

- To enable each child to reach his or her personal potential.
- To put into practice the theory and principles of Maria Montessori's educational pedagogy in order to facilitate the fulfilment of this potential.
- To create a caring and positive environment in which all children, families, and staff are valued, as individuals and for their contribution to the life of the school.
- To provide a diverse, relevant and individually tailored curriculum that encourages development emotionally, socially, intellectually, physically and spiritually.
- To cultivate an atmosphere of respect and acceptance by celebrating the differences that make our diverse community such a fascinating place to live.
- To aid each child in becoming as independent as his/her abilities will allow.
- To prepare each child so that they may contribute positively to the community to which they belong.
- To work in partnership with parents for the benefit of each child.

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

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC), 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 Getting it right for every child: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

## What people told us

We spoke to children informally about nursery during our visit. We observed happy and relaxed children who were having fun and were engaged in learning through their play.

We issued an online survey to the service to distribute to parents and carers during the inspection. We received 9 responses. Overall, parents were happy with the level of care and support their children received at service. Most believed that staff knew their child well and had built strong relationships with them.

However some parents believed communication between the service and parents could be improved. Further details are noted in the body of the report.

Additional comments are also recorded in the body of the report.

## Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at their improvement plan and quality assurance paperwork. These demonstrated their identified priorities for development and how they were monitoring the quality of the provision within the service.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

## Quality of care and support

### Findings from the inspection

We observed staff that were kind, nurturing, and very responsive to children's needs. Children benefitted from this approach as it promoted a caring learning environment where they were supported to reach their potential. There was a focus on wellbeing and nurture and we observed staff promoting a warm, caring and enthusiastic approach. Children were involved in their own care through staff asking permission, respecting children's responses and responding to the non-verbal cues.

Children were happily engaged in their play throughout our visit and the familiar routines contributed to their emotional wellbeing. Each playroom provided a regular but flexible pattern to the day. Play experiences were fun and helped children to develop their confidence, curiosity, and imagination. Children had time and space to follow their own ideas and learn at their own pace. They moved freely between indoors and the garden, having opportunities for uninterrupted play.

Children benefited from a relaxed unhurried meal experience, although on some occasions the lunch area was very busy. We discussed with the manager some ways that the lunch could be further improved. Children enjoyed a nutritious lunch and were very independent when eating. Older children had the

opportunity to learn about food preparation and were often involved in baking activities. This helped them develop a positive attitude towards healthy eating.

When talking with staff it was evident that they knew the children and families well. They were able to give examples where they had supported children and families, offering additional support to children with additional needs. They spoke confidently about children's individual needs and how they supported them. Additionally, staff had gathered information about children and their families to inform personal plans. Most parents supported these findings, one parent commented 'The small class sizes and school size mean that my children have contact with multiple staff members throughout the day. In addition, when children move from one class to another, the staff are able to share detailed information with the next teacher about my child'.

All staff had a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities for keeping children safe and protected. They participated in regular training and ensured they were up to date with best practice and legislation.

The service had appropriate infection prevention and control procedures in place to support a safe environment for children and staff. We observed children being supported to understand the need for good hygiene by washing their hands before snack and at regular times during their play.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

The premises provided a welcoming environment with rooms that were clean, bright, and well ventilated ensuring a comfortable setting for children and staff. Spaces within each area were arranged to create a balance of stimulating and calming experiences to suit individual needs. Each playroom was a comfortable space where children were settled and engaged. They explored the resources around them leading their own learning. They particularly enjoyed playing outside in the paddock area or the well resourced garden area. They were developing skills in areas such as measuring, problem solving, language, creativity and imagination, as well as drama and arts.

The room layouts promoted free flow play which allowed children's interest to be explored independently. A range of open-ended resources and loose parts provided opportunities for children to be creative and problem-solve. Children were learning to be responsible, they were respectful of the resources and were happy to tidy up after each activity supported by staff when needed.

Staff promoted a self-regulated risk benefit approach to learning and we observed staff supporting children during risker play, this approach build's children's self confidence, self esteem, and gives them valuable life skills by setting their own boundaries within a secure setting.

We sampled accident and incident records and risk assessments, we saw that management audited these to identify common patterns or safety concerns.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

We found that staff worked well together, and were respectful in their interactions with each other, creating a positive ethos within the service. There was a good sense of teamwork and positive working relationships had been established which meant that children and families experienced a warm, caring atmosphere.

Staff we spoke with were knowledgeable about the needs of individual children and worked with them to plan activities around their interests. Staff had worked with parents and other professionals to share strategies that would help meet children's individual needs.

Reflective practice was also encouraged through management and peer observation. Staff observed each other's practice, providing opportunities for improvement discussions and celebrations of success. This helped staff feel supported and more confident to plan children's play.

The service had safe recruitment and induction procedures, which were organised and reflected the national guidance 'Safer Recruitment through Better Recruitment'. All staff that we spoke with understood their role and responsibilities which led to positive experiences and outcomes for children. All staff that we spoke with told us they felt well supported by the management team.

Staff were committed and professional. They took responsibility for their own professional development as well as any learning required by the service to be meet the needs of children in their care. For example, staff had been learning sign language. This is to ensure that they were able to communicate with all children attending. Through our online survey one parent told us: 'The staff here are all very well trained in their field of expertise. I feel there is a high staff to student ratio and that the quality of experiences they have access to is amazing. To have trained musical, art, occupational, outdoor educators in addition to their general teachers is an amazing benefit to this school.'

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 5 - very good

## Quality of management and leadership

### Findings from the inspection

Throughout this inspection we found the management team to be responsive and committed to improving outcomes for children. We saw strong, effective leadership with management nurturing staff through change during the pandemic.

The manager had a strong focus on supporting staff's health and wellbeing and had introduced a variety of ways to support them throughout the pandemic and beyond.

Staff were well supported to carry out their roles and received regular feedback on their work and participated in formal performance reviews with their manager.

Regular team meetings were held to keep staff informed and involved with the development of the service. The manager held supervision and appraisal meetings and monitored staff practice with focus observations to identify areas of development.

Most parents believed communication and relationships were a strength of the nursery, although some would have liked more frequent information about children's learning and progress. Comments received from parents included: 'I do not get as much information as I would like. I get one entry in transparent classroom per week. I get incident reports when an accident happens. But teachers rarely talk to me about my child's day'. Overall, the communication between teachers/school and parents is not great', and 'not much information given on a daily basis. only one, max two entries in the online system per week. at drop off, one of the teachers is always pretty distant and certainly not inviting general conversation or chat'.

We discussed parents comments with the manager who agreed that more work was needed to establish parents expectation's around communication and provide more details to them on what communication they would receive from the service.

Of the personal plans that we sampled during our inspection we found they contained the required information. However, management and staff should continue to develop these to ensure they reflect 'how' they will be supporting children's health, welfare, and safety needs. See recommendation 1.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 1

1. The manager and staff should further develop children's personal plans to ensure that each child has a plan that details how staff will meet their health, welfare and safety needs.

<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/4653/personal-plans-guide-elc-final-13102021.pdf>

This is to ensure Care and Support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.' (HSCS4.11)

**Grade:** 4 - good

**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

There are no outstanding recommendations.

## Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website ([www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

## Enforcement

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

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings
27 Sep 2018	Unannounced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>4 - Good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>4 - Good</div>
5 Dec 2016	Unannounced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>Not assessed</div>
22 Sep 2014	Unannounced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>4 - Good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>4 - Good</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>4 - Good</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>4 - Good</div>
5 Nov 2013	Unannounced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>2 - Weak</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>4 - Good</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>4 - Good</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>3 - Adequate</div>
27 Nov 2012	Unannounced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>4 - Good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>3 - Adequate</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>3 - Adequate</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>4 - Good</div>
23 Feb 2011	Unannounced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Staffing</div> <div>Not assessed</div> <div>Management and leadership</div> <div>Not assessed</div>
16 Dec 2009	Unannounced	<div>Care and support</div> <div>5 - Very good</div> <div>Environment</div> <div>Not assessed</div>



Date	Type	Gradings	
		Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 5 - Very good
4 Jun 2008	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good 4 - Good 3 - Adequate 3 - Adequate

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