

# Sinclair Nursery Day Care of Children

6 Sinclair Drive  
Battlefield  
Glasgow  
G42 9QE

Telephone: 01416 361 212

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
9 August 2023

**Service provided by:**  
Sinclair Nursery Limited

**Service provider number:**  
SP2008009750

**Service no:**  
CS2008175050

## About the service

The service is provided by Sinclair Nursery Ltd to provide a care service to a maximum of 98 children not yet attending primary school at any one time, of whom no more than 27 are aged under two years; no more than 21 are aged two years to under three years and; no more than 50 are aged three years to those not yet attending primary school full time.

The nursery is situated in Battlefield, Glasgow and has fully enclosed, well equipped garden areas. It is close to public transport, local parks and community facilities.

The service is in partnership with Glasgow City Council to provide early learning and childcare to children aged between three and five years.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 7 and 8 August 2023, feedback was given to the manager, area manager and depute manager on 9 August 2023. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 children using the service
- received electronic feedback from 31 parents/carers whose children attend the service
- spoke with management and staff
- received electronic feedback from 13 staff who work in the service
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

## Key messages

- Children were safe, loved and secure in their attachments with staff at the service.
- The management and staff team worked well together.
- The service needed to further improve mealtime experiences for all children.
- The management team need to plan periods of transition more effectively.
- The provider should ensure planned refurbishments are carried out.
- Infection prevention and control procedures needed to be more robust to promote a safe environment for children and families.
- Resources and experiences for children needed to be reviewed, improved and monitored.

## 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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
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?

## 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this quality indicator as adequate. While some strengths had a positive impact, key areas needed to improve.

### Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff were warm, kind and nurturing towards children. We observed children and families being warmly welcomed when they arrived at the service. Parents who provided feedback spoke positively about how their children were cared for, and treated by staff. Some of their comments included:

"The staff are kind and caring and my child enjoys going to nursery, interacting with the staff and children." and "Sinclair Nursery has a family feeling about it. The warmth the team provide to all children, even if they aren't in their room is lovely. Even at the end of a long day, the staff always have time to stop and say hello to parents and children. They themselves feel like a family to each other, it's clear to see they work well together and are a team. Sinclair nursery doesn't feel like it's a service, it feels like I'm dropping my child off with a family member."

There was a lot of transitional changes at the time of our inspection, several children were new to the setting and having settling visits, some children were experiencing settling visits to new rooms and some staff had been recently deployed in new rooms. These changes could have been better managed to minimise the impact on children. Although children who required comfort received it, it added stress and unsettlement.

Some parents whose children require additional support felt that their children did not always receive the right kind of support at the right time and staff required additional training to support children with additional support needs. The manager and area manager agreed to carry out an audit of staff skills and experience and provide additional support and training where required.

Staff knew children well. They could confidently talk about their individual needs and interests. Although improvements had been made to how information was gathered within personal plans we found that information staff had gathered through observations or talking with parents was not always recorded within personal plans. This meant that not all plans were up to date or reflective of changes to children's routines. Additionally they did not always contain the strategies known to help support children be relaxed, comfortable or to reach their potential. The service should continue to consolidate and monitor children's personal plans, ensuring children benefit from appropriate support for their care, development and progress.

We observed children over snack and lunchtimes. The management team told us how they were making changes to children's mealtime routines and monitoring the impact of these changes. Our observations highlighted that further monitoring and improvements had to be made to ensure children received a relaxed, nutritious lunchtime experience where they could be involved in the planning and preparation. On the first day of our inspection we noted that children under three were offered homemade soup with dry bread and then custard for their lunch. Older children were offered an alternative lunch if they did not want soup and bread. We looked at the planned two week menus for the service and discussed with the management team how they needed to review and monitor the nutritional value of the meals provided.

The management team informed us that changes to menus and the use of outside caterers was planned to commence the following week. The management team assured us that they would be monitoring the quality of the meals provided and making changes if necessary.

Safe and effective systems were in place to support children who required medication. Staff were very aware of children with medical needs, including allergies and intolerances. Information regarding ailments was documented within medical consent forms as well as children's individual personal plans. A system to check and review medical information with parents was in place and being used effectively. This contributed to the health and safety of children attending the service. Medication was stored safely and was easily accessible for staff when needed.

### **Quality indicator 1.3: Play and Learning**

On the first day of our inspection, children did not have enough opportunities to be curious within their environment by exploring creative and sensory play. There were not enough opportunities for children to make sense of their world through sensory play experiences. For example, exploring textured material, natural wooden objects and malleable materials. Children would benefit from playing with natural materials to support their curiosity, creativity and problem solving.

Staff missed opportunities to support the development of skills in literacy, numeracy and problem solving. However, this had improved on the second day of our inspection. To ensure children consistently experience high quality play and learning experiences, a programme of training should be implemented to ensure staff have the skills and confidence in creating challenging, stimulating play opportunities for all age groups of children. See area for improvement 1.

Children had limited opportunities to lead their own learning. Our observations highlighted that there was a lack of resources and equipment that would stimulate curiosity and interests in children. As a result children were not always engaged in activities or experiences to support their learning and development. Some parents who provided feedback commented on the quality of resources and experiences. Some of their comments included:

"Some resources, particularly books are worn and torn. There is a limited amount of resources readily available for play. I have seen provocations set up to prompt learning. Displays are at adult height. The environment could be more literacy rich." and "There have been lots of new toys and books added to the nursery over the last few months which is great to see."

Children were often directed to adult led activities, reducing their chance to be creative and develop their ideas and thinking. We discussed with staff the importance of children having access to a wide variety of resources and materials across the day to support breadth of learning. See area for improvement 2.

Learning journals which were shared with parents online did evidence more positive examples of rich resources and experiences children had previously engaged with. Learning journals had clear links to children's personal plans and progress could be seen in some of their learning and development. We could see that parents interacted with the online learning journals, and saw some examples where parents had commented on their children's learning or shared photographs of experiences children had engaged in at home. This helped both parents and the service to extend and enhance children's learning.

Children had some opportunities to explore and be part of their local community through regular walks to different amenities such as local parks, the library and local adult day care centre. Staff and management told us about their plans to make further more regular use of the local community as they felt this had not been as regular post pandemic. Involving children in their local community contributes to their mental and physical wellbeing and encourages their curiosity about the world around them. One parent who provided feedback told us "I love that the nursery utilise their community to offer children new experiences such as parents coming in to bake and do music activities."

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children receive high quality experiences through play and positive interactions with staff, the management team should support staff to develop their skills. To do this, the provider should, at a minimum arrange a programme of training to support staff to improve their knowledge and understanding of relevant early learning and childcare theory and practice. This should include, but is not limited to child development and how to effectively observe children and plan for children's play and learning experiences. This will ensure children receive responsive care and support from staff.

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

2. To ensure that children are supported to develop and learn, the manager should make sure that they experience high quality freely chosen play experiences and resources. To do this, the provider should, at a minimum:

Improve the quality of resources available to children to ensure children are provided with sufficient opportunities to engage meaningfully with their play environment.

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)

## How good is our setting?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

#### Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in an environment which was clean, bright and well ventilated. We looked at detailed refurbishment plans which the new provider had developed. We noted that extensive plans were in place to improve both the indoor and outdoor environments.

We discussed with the management team how the provider should prioritise the planned refurbishment of children's toilets and the nappy changing area within the toilets to ensure that they are hygienically safe and comply with best practice guidance. We were reassured by the area manager that these improvements would be prioritised.

Children were able to play outdoors everyday. Some play rooms had direct access to the outdoors, in other rooms children had to be taken outdoors to play. Children had plenty of space to play and explore outdoors. We discussed with the management team how they should, prior to refurbishment, research quality outdoor play equipment and experiences. Careful planning of the refurbished outdoor play spaces would mean that children had opportunities to explore, be creative and use their imagination outdoors.

A recent audit of how the environment was being used for children aged 2-5 years had led to improved outcomes for children. As a result of observations and consultation with staff, children and families a decision was made to separate children aged 2-5. This meant that children aged 2-3 were being cared for in a separate room. This meant children were experiencing an environment which was quieter and calmer.

The service need to improve how they monitor and address maintenance and repairs within the setting. During our inspection we noted a broken tap and toilet flush within the children's toilets, and a broken light fitting within one of the nappy changing areas. We were unsure how long these had been broken for as they had not been recorded within the service's repair and maintenance book. The manager should ensure that a more robust system is maintained for recording and reporting maintenance issues. We acknowledged that these repairs were being attended to by the end of our inspection visits.

We identified some areas for improvement required to minimise the spread of infection, for example we highlighted to the manager times when staff did not use or dispose of personal protective equipment safely and when children did not wash hands before lunch. We have asked that the manager review infection prevention and control procedures with staff. (See area for improvement 1)

Information about children was kept securely. Sensitive information was only shared with those who needed it to meet children's needs. As a result, children's information was protected and storage complied with relevant best practice.

## Areas for improvement

1.  
The provider must ensure that children are cared for in a safe and hygienic environment and sufficient measures are in place to protect children in line with best practice guidance.

To do this, the provider should, as a minimum ensure:

- a) Staff understand and carry out current infection prevention and control practices.
- b) Essential equipment such as toilets are in a good state of repair, and in working order.
- c) Staff revisit infection prevention and control training.
- d) An effective system for monitoring and recording maintenance issues is introduced and used effectively.
- e) An effective system for monitoring infection prevention and control practices is introduced and used effectively.

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 organisational codes." (HSCS 3.14) and "I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment." (HSCS 5.22)

## How good is our leadership?

4 – Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are well led

The management and staff team had a friendly and welcoming approach with children and families. All children were welcomed for settle in sessions and parents were able to speak with staff about their child's needs. Information was shared with all parents about their child verbally at the end of each session, including care routines and interests. Parents received information about their child's progress and development through online journals. The service regularly informed and consulted with families. This helped to ensure the service was reflecting on parents wishes and helped to build trusting relationships.

We received positive feedback from parents about how the service was led. Some of their comments included:

"The management team are always on the ball and know everything about the nursery and the children. They are always thinking of new ideas and helping the staff where needed. They are very involved and it shows as the children know them well. You can tell they are well respected by the staff and parents."

"Excellent two-way communication with management. Management excellent."

"Management are friendly, approachable, and responsive."

An effective system was in place to support the management and staff team to reflect on all aspects of the quality of the service provided. The service had experienced a recent change in provider and were therefore in the early stages of their revised improvement journey. Quality assurance systems introduced by the provider were comprehensive but would need time to embed. We could see how the management team had involved staff in the service's self evaluation journey and that self evaluation had been highlighted as an area for improvement within the service's current improvement plan.

Staff we spoke to and received feedback from told us that they felt consulted and involved in the life and work of the service. They told us that they had opportunities to meet together as a team and discuss their ideas at staff meetings and that their opinions were considered and valued. The management team should continue to implement their plans to reintroduce champion roles within the team. This would support staff's sense of ownership of the setting's improvement journey.

The vision, value and aims of the service had not been reviewed or updated for several years. As a result it did not reflect the aims of the service or have any focus on improvement. The manager should involve staff, children and families in reviewing these to ensure they reflect the aspirations of children, families and staff.



**How good is our staff team?****4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children/people and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

**Quality indicator 4.3: Staff Deployment**

Staff were warm, approachable and caring. Working well together they had created a welcoming environment for children and families. Parents who provided feedback were very complimentary about the staff team. Some of their comments included:

"The staff are incredibly attentive and take a real interest in my son."

"Great staff team, made me feel comfortable settling my daughter and put me at ease."

"The staff are exceptional. Professional, dedicated, perceptive, kind and supportive."

We observed that the level and deployment of staff within the setting ensured children's needs were met by the right number of people. There had been a significant turnover of staff since the last inspection. The service provider's safe recruitment processes helped ensure children were cared for by staff who were fit to work with them. Staff who had been newly deployed within the setting told us about the induction process they had participated in and felt they were made to feel welcome and understand the expectations of their role. We observed staff communicating and working well with each other.

A keyworker system was used to help children to foster attachment and feel emotionally secure. Parents and carers knew the staff caring for their children. This was reassuring for families. One parent who provided feedback told us "Consistent staff and key worker. They know my baby well and her likes/dislikes and always looking to update her learning needs."

Staff leave and breaks were planned carefully to ensure minimum disruption to children and their routines. The management team told us that they are able to plan for and adapt to planned absences within the setting and that they do not need to employ agency staff. This help to provide a consistent level of care and support to children.

**Complaints**

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	3 - Adequate
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	3 - Adequate
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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Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

0345 600 9527

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