

Stanwell Nursery School Day Care of Children

Junction Place
Edinburgh
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
11 September 2025

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002576

Service no:
CS2003015837

About the service

Stanwell Nursery School is currently registered to provide a daycare of children service to a maximum of 64 children aged from three years to an age to attend primary school.

The service is provided from a building and garden which the service have sole use of. The playrooms have direct access to an enclosed garden space and children can move freely between all the play spaces. Two of the rooms have food preparation areas which are accessible by staff. Children and their families access the nursery through the nursery garden. There are cloakroom areas for children to store their belongings. There are toilet and changing areas at each end of the building.

The service operates during the school term time only and children can attend for morning sessions from 08:30 until 15:00 Monday to Thursday and 08:30 until 12:30 on a Friday. The service is provided by City of Edinburgh Council.

The manager is also the manager of Leith Community Nursery.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 8 and 9 September between 9:15 and 16:30. 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.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service and their families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Leaders and staff worked together well to identify and action improvements in the service to help children have positive experiences.
- Children were having fun engaged in a rich variety of play experiences which would support their learning and development in and outdoors.
- Mealtimes were relaxed sociable experiences helping children to develop a positive relationship with food.
- The environment was well resourced, clean and offered children inviting spaces to lead their own learning and development.
- Areas for development identified should be addressed to ensure that children continue to have safe experiences at the service.

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?	5 - Very 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.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff were calm, patient and nurturing in their interactions with children. They responded quickly and kindly to individual children's verbal and non-verbal requests for attention and needs. Staff were patient and took time to support children to make themselves understood. They used a range of methods including signing and visual aids, this supported children who had communication needs. The service should continue to develop this practice to support all children to understand more and communicate confidently in the service.

Staff were proactive at accessing training for staff and support for children to help them to have a positive experience at nursery. For example, training from the Complex and sensory needs team at City of Edinburgh Council (CEC).

Staff used positive language with children, encouraging them to be creative and reflect on their actions. This helped children to feel empowered to make good choices about their behaviours. Staff spoke with children throughout their day, describing what they were doing, asking questions and adding to their vocabulary.

Personal plans were developed with families helping staff to get to know key information about children before they started in the service. Staff kept records of conversations and significant events to support them to have current information about children's needs and provide consistent and effective care for them. The strategies of support developed for some children were clear and provided practical guidance for staff to support children to have positive experiences. This was not consistent for all plans and should be further developed, for example, to ensure that all children who have English as a second language have clear strategies of support (see area for improvement 1).

Permission to administer medication and records of administration were kept with medicines in a secure and accessible place. These could be further developed to ensure it is clear when they have been reviewed, and that they show clear strategies for all children's healthcare needs. For example, what to do if medication doesn't work or how to manage children's allergies. This would help to ensure that all staff know what action to take in the event of an emergency to keep children safe (see area for improvement 1).

Snacks and meal were well planned to allow children to develop a taste for healthy foods. Staff supported them to access these safely and sat with them helping children to have positive social experiences. Staff were familiar with children's cultural preferences and allergies and meal areas had reference sheets for staff to check details. Some children chose not to eat during our visits. For some children, staff used successful strategies to encourage them to try meals. The service should monitor this and develop plans to support all children to access appropriate nutrition while at the service (see area for improvement 1).

Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children were having fun, busy and engaged in play which would support their development of new skills.

Staff planning supported them to develop the well-resourced environment which allowed children to lead their own play. Children were supported by attentive staff who were available to converse and scaffold learning when needed. Staff used effective questioning to extend children's ideas and curiosity throughout their play. The environment was well thought out providing children with open ended and structured materials to develop new skills, consolidate learning and experiment with new ideas. Opportunities to develop creative, literacy and numeracy skills were available across the in and outdoor spaces. Children felt safe acting out imaginative play ideas, in familiar spaces like the home corner, supported by calm thoughtful adults. Inviting sensory experiences gave children space to explore and experiment concepts like measuring and capacity. Opportunities to climb and balance outside helped children to practice skills and develop their awareness of risk and keeping themselves safe.

Children accessed resources in the local community for example, they enjoyed learning about how to care for plants at the allotment at Leith crofts. This supported them to develop a respect for nature.

Children were supported to lead their own learning and make choices about where and what they wanted to play. The staff team could further enhance this by adding to intentional planning for the group and individuals to support skills development.

Learning journals for some children were very personal and descriptive, giving clear information about the context and what the child was doing, experiencing and learning. This was not consistent for all children and should be developed further to support their ongoing development.

The staff team could further develop how their planning and children's personal plans, including tracking of development and observations, are linked to ensure that these provide an effective system of support all children's learning and development.

Areas for improvement

1. To promote children's overall wellbeing, personal planning should be further developed to ensure that all children are supported to achieve their full potential. This should include, but is not limited to:

- developing strategies of support for all children who have specific needs
- reviewing healthcare and medical needs to ensure that strategies are clear and records are reviewed regularly to keep information current to ensure staff can keep them safe
- monitor and develop plans to support all children to access appropriate nutrition while at the service.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: as a child, 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as my care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.14) and 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

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.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The nursery was well furnished, comfortable, and clean. The high ceilings and big windows gave the space a bright open feel. The free flow access to the garden meant that children could access the garden throughout their day and there was good ventilation.

Children had space to store their belongings, and children's artwork was displayed throughout the nursery. This helped children to understand that they and their belongings mattered.

The resources were appropriate to the age and stage of development for children attending, giving them a rich variety of experiences. There were a range of resources, wooden, natural and loose parts, which were in a good state of repair, helping children to feel respected.

Staff reset areas throughout the day, ensuring that areas were well resourced and attractive for children. There were appropriate resources to support children's learning in and outdoors, helping children to access experiences which supported learning wherever they chose to play at their own pace.

Some areas in the nursery should be reviewed to ensure that these continue to provide children with a respectful environment, for example broken planters, rugs in some areas and damaged mats around the climbing areas. Consideration could also be given to the number of mats used to ensure that these can support children to climb safely on all combinations of the climbing frame.

Staff had identified issues in the environment and these were generally actioned well. Staff worked together to remove risks. For example, considering where fences could be climbed and reducing potential for this. However, the risks presented by the garden gate being the sole entrance to the building and not being able to be fully secured had not been fully addressed. Staff were managing this well, however, considerations should be given, by the provider, to additional measures to prevent the potential risk of children being able to access and open this independently and members of the public being able to access the garden unannounced (see area for improvement 1).

Children were familiar with good handwashing routines, for example washing hands before and after meals. Staff were familiar with infection prevention and control measures and were carrying out procedures like handwashing and cleaning consistently. This helped to keep the environment clean and prevent the spread of infection, keeping children safe.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children have a consistently safe place to play, the service should review security measures. This should include, but is not limited to:

- considering how people access the nursery
- the security of the access gate.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19).

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

A shared value base amongst staff helped to ensure that the service's vision for how they should be working with families and children is put in place effectively. For example, staff were welcoming families into the service and sharing information daily with them about their child's experiences, helping them to feel involved in their child's learning and development. Children felt safe and confident accessing experiences because staff were working with them in a respectful way. Staff commitment to consulting with children meant that children's voices were evident throughout the planning and development of experiences.

Children, families and staff feedback was valued and used to identify and plan for improvements. The service had prioritised working to reduce barriers to inclusion in the service for children and their families who had English as a second language, this will help to ensure everyone is included.

Enabling leadership values have supported staff to feel valued and respected. Staff had opportunities for regular professional discussions, one to one support, feedback and planning on their continued professional development with leaders. This helped staff to improve practice in the setting. The training opportunities provided for staff had developed awareness of best practice and developed skills, helping to improve children's experiences. A particular strength of the service was their commitment to improving the quality of care provided. For example, staff told us about their delegated roles and responsibilities in taking areas of development forward.

Leaders demonstrated a positive solutions focussed attitude to issues identified in the service, this was helping the service to progress. Systems were in place which supported the staff team to evaluate their practice and the children's experiences. This had supported them to develop an improvement plan which was embedded into their practice and was driving improvements for children, for example staff were involved with developing Pedagogy. The leadership team were supporting staff to further develop their peer reviews and identify and make improvements in key areas of practice. Staff were supported to become familiar with best practice guidance documents to support them to self evaluate and drive improvements in the care play and learning provided.

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.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The service was well staffed to meet the needs of the children in attendance. There were still times during the day when staff were stretched to meet the needs of the children attending. This was due to the high level of care needs children had and the layout of the building and garden areas. The leaders should continue to monitor this to ensure that staff deployment always provides the best experiences for children.

We saw that effective use was made of staffs differing skills and experience helping to keep children safe. Staff were confident in caring for the children who they knew well.

Systems were in place to keep track of the numbers of children present throughout the day and care needs like eating. For example, the white board was used to keep track of the children attending as they arrived at the service.

Staff were deployed to specific areas to develop activities, support children's engagement and monitor their experiences. Staff were engaged in conversation and play with the children who chose to play in the area they were deployed to. Staff told us that this helped them to provide effective supervision and continuity in children's play and learning. Leaders provided cover to allow staff to do targeted work or observations with their keyworker group if they hadn't been accessing the areas they were deployed to. This helped all children to have clear tracking of their experiences supporting their development. Deployment at mealtimes allowed staff to sit at tables with children and have good discussions with them, for example about the food provided or areas of current interest. Staff were also able to monitor children closely and support them to eat safely, reducing the risk of choking.

Leaders also spent time on the floor role modelling expected practice and covering break times to help to ensure quality of care across the day and keep children safe.

Having regular supply staff was supporting children to feel safe as they knew staff well and staff knew them and their needs well.

Deployment at arrival and departure times was supporting children to be safe. Staff should be aware of all families at busier times of the day to ensure that they receive feedback about their child's day.

Newer staff told us how they had been supported to learn about how the service worked and to learn about individual children's needs, helping them to feel confident in their role and meet children's needs well.

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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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