

# Kirkliston Primary Early Learning and Childcare Day Care of Children

Kirkliston Primary Early Learning and Childcare  
3 Kirklands Park Street  
Edinburgh  
EH29 9EY

Telephone: 0131 3332 336

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
13 November 2025

**Service provided by:**  
City of Edinburgh Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002576

**Service no:**  
CS2003017037

## About the service

Kirkliston Primary Early Learning and Childcare is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 116 children aged between birth and primary school entry at any one time, of whom no more than 6 are aged under 2 years; no more than 30 are aged 2 years to under 3 years.

The new build premises has five playrooms and office spaces on one level which is attached to the primary one premises for the school. Playrooms have direct access to garden spaces around the building. The service was not operating at capacity and were only using three of the playrooms. All children currently using the service were two years old or older. The service is located in Kirkliston with access to local amenities, parks, shops and outdoor spaces.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10 November from 09:05 to 17:50 and 11 November 2025 from 09:15 to 17:25. 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
- spoke with staff and management
- reviewed online feedback from ten families
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

At the time of this inspection, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvement is necessary throughout the report and have made one area for improvement within 'Leadership' with regards to an issue in the environment.

During this inspection we 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.

## Key messages

- Children had positive relationships with the staff who cared for them. Staff were kind, caring and responded well to children's immediate needs.
- Children had fun playing with friends in the nursery. Children moved freely between in and outdoor spaces, helping them to stay active and enjoy nature.
- Staff planned experiences which took account of children's interests and supported them to learn new skills. More could be done to strengthen the link between planning approaches and children's learning and progress.
- Children enjoyed sociable mealtimes which supported them to develop a taste for healthy foods.
- The service could further develop their quality assurance systems to ensure that progress is made on identified improvements.
- More could be done to explore and support children's equity of experience in 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

Leadership	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## Leadership 4 - Good

### Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

The service and the school they shared a premises with had a clear vision, values and aims which was shared with the families and staff team. Staff shared how they worked to these to provide positive experiences for children and their families. The leaders planned to redevelop their vision, values and aims in consultation with children, families and the staff team to ensure that it accurately reflected their views and the current service. Staff told us they felt well supported by the management team and were confident in sharing their ideas and views. All parents who completed our online survey agreed they were meaningfully involved in developing the service. The staff team were committed to providing high quality care play and learning. Staff were reflective practitioners who considered how they could improve through regular discussions and meetings.

A quality assurance calendar supported ongoing monitoring and auditing of the service. The leadership team was in the process of developing the self-evaluation systems to support them to improve practice and consistency in the service. For example, by auditing accident forms and learning journal entries. The accident audits could be further developed through evaluation of data to identify patterns and changes to practice which could support a reduction in incidences. The plans to improve learning journals from the leaders quality assurance had not yet been implemented. The records could be further developed to share the evaluations from monitoring and ensure that measures of success are considered to support progress on any actions identified. Consideration could also be given to delegating aspects of monitoring. This would support staff to build their own skills in self-evaluation, for example, through peer reviews. Quality assurance systems should now be reviewed to ensure that data is processed to give clear evaluations and progress on improvements are monitored (see area for improvement 1).

There is a low fence in the garden which presents a risk to children while playing. We saw staff managing this well however, it often stopped staff from being able to focus on children's learning experiences. This was identified by the service and reported over a year ago. No action has been taken to increase the fence height. Systems should be now be introduced to ensure progress is made on all identified improvements especially where there are risks (see area for improvement 1).

We highlighted issues with equity of experience when the nursery starts to make use of the baby and second two year old room. The rooms were small, the floor space in the baby room was compromised by a large kitchen. There were no designated sleep spaces and the garden spaces were very small and limited in flexibility of space. This could lead to poorer experiences for the children accessing them. Plans for how these spaces will be used should be reviewed as part of the services quality assurance processes to ensure that there are plans to reduce the differences in the equity of children's experiences (see area for improvement 1).

Staff felt well informed to complete the tasks expected of them in their roles. Approaches to induction for new staff could be improved, considering existing skills and knowledge and further supporting individual development. We signposted the service to the national induction resource that offers best practice guidance for inductions. Mentoring plans could also be further developed to ensure that roles and

responsibilities are clear and staff feel fully supported in being a mentor and being mentored to support consistently high quality outcomes for children.

### Areas for improvement

1.

To further develop the quality of the service and enhance outcomes for children, the provider should ensure that quality assurance processes, improvement planning and self-evaluation are further developed and embedded. The processes should identify strengths and areas for improvements, with the development of clear improvement plans and monitoring of progress to support positive outcomes for children and families. This should include, but is not limited to:

- taking action to address the low fence which presents a risk in the garden
- planning for equity of experience across the service.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

## Children play and learn 4 - Good

### Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children were enjoying their play having fun. They were generally well engaged and purposeful. Children enjoyed learning new skills while playing with high quality resources provided by the staff team. For example, a group of children were making cakes with playdough using child sized kitchen utensils and sourced scissors to cut the dough, copying each other. Another group were playing in the mud kitchen outside, requesting additional resources from staff to help them develop their ideas.

Children moved resources around the in and outdoor play spaces enabling them to expand their play. Children were confident to ask for additional resources when they needed them which was supported by staff. This helped children feel listened to and respected. The majority of families told us their child can be involved in a range of opportunities and fun experiences to meet their individual needs and support their development. One family commented: "They do so much at the nursery: day-to-day there are always a range of activities on the go, both indoor and outdoor. My child loves to create, and always enjoys the art activities on offer. As well as day-to-day activities, the nursery also arranges seasonal activities such as spring and autumn walks around the village, and visits from different people such as a paramedic and firefighters." This meant that children had to access a range of experiences which supported their development.

Some staff were skilled at mirroring children's emotions and feelings, helping them to build emotional resilience. All staff were responsive to children and stepped in when needed to keep them safe physically and emotionally. Interactions from staff were sensitive and encouraged children to consider what they were doing. For example "does that feel safe?" when a child was climbing.

Planning systems were in place and staff were familiar with the approaches used. Responsive plans were displayed in each area and were added to in the moment. These could be further developed to ensure that

they support staff to identify how individuals are contributing and learning from experience. Intentional planning monthly captured key themes based around seasonal and cultural events and children's current interests from responsive plans. Evaluations could be further developed to capture the learning that has taken place for children.

Learning journals were capturing children's experiences and celebrated achievements. Parents were engaging with the learning journals, helping them to feel involved in their child's learning. Some parents shared that they would like more updates about their child's learning. Further work is needed to strengthen the link between the planning approaches and learning journals to reflect children's progress and learning.

Children in all rooms made use of in and outdoor spaces throughout the day, however the variety and quality of experiences provided varied depending on which spaces children could access. Further exploration of how to manage this could support children to have consistently high quality experiences. For example, the differences between the different garden spaces meant that some children had easy access to bike riding, others had access to hills for rolling. The fencing in the middle meant no one had good opportunities to explore the 'water feature' in a meaningful way (see area for improvement 1). Consideration should also be given to the quality of the experiences which can be provided in the two unused areas of the garden before the service starts to provide care for children in these areas.

The play experiences for children who attended the nursery on different patterns were also not consistent. Children on term-time placements had all of their care in one room, while children attending longer days were moved to a different room each afternoon. The play experiences provided towards the end of the day were also not as rich as areas were tidied away and children then had limited access to resources. Consideration should be given to the quality of children's experiences to ensure that these are equitable across the different patterns of attendance (see area for improvement 1).

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that all children to have high quality play opportunities to support them to have fun, learn and develop, the provider should ensure that the quality of experiences are consistent across the nursery. This should include, but is not limited to:

- Consideration of patterns of attendance in ensuring that all children have equitable access to high quality in and outdoor play experiences.
- Consideration of equity of experience across all playrooms and garden spaces.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable to my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

## Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

### Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children experienced warm and nurturing interactions from staff. Their names were used when staff spoke to them and children received cuddles and affection. This let children know that they were valued and respected.

Personal plans were in place for all children and were reflective of guidance. The majority of families felt involved in developing and reviewing their child's plan. Staff knew children well and could speak about their needs and strategies of support. An additional support for learning overview sheet and folders in the rooms enabled staff to cross reference any changes to a child's care or approaches to be used. Further work is needed to ensure that records clearly document strategies of support for children and evaluates their progress. This will help to ensure that supports are right for children, implemented consistently and used to inform future strategies. Staff should also be clear in documenting all concerns to support them to identify additional needs that have to be met. The service should continue to explore how effective the current system for recording information to support consistency of care is for providing staff with the information they need in the rooms.

Where concerns about children's wellbeing had been identified paperwork was completed which demonstrated an awareness of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). To ensure that children receive the right support and intervention at the right time these approaches and records should be further developed. For example, where the service have identified that they are 'monitoring' a situation, clear timescales and actions must be developed and reviewed to ensure that action is completed within a reasonable time to ensure wellbeing. Assessment of needs and wellbeing concerns forms must have clearly identified protective factors and concerns to ensure children's safety.

Parents and children gave us positive feedback on the meals and snack provided at the service. In the willow and blossom rooms children had good opportunities for self service, helping them to build independence skills. Displays helped children to know how much a 'portion' of each food was. However, staff should continue to monitor how this is working to ensure that all children can access the foods described on the menu. Children in the robin room were confident self-serving their drinks and were learning to sit at the tables to share lunch with their peers, supported by staff. This helped children to have a safe and sociable mealtime experience. Staff knew which children had allergies or cultural food preferences and this was managed well to keep them safe. Children were familiar with handwashing before and after mealtimes and regular toothbrushing opportunities helped them to build good dental health awareness.

We saw that some children were offered sleeps when they were tired and this was often in a cosy corner. Children were settled and woken from sleep sensitively by staff. The children in the robin room could not access the story corner while others were sleeping due to the limited space available. In all rooms, it was hard for staff to offer quiet space for children to sleep as it was offered in the main play space. Consideration should be given to how this could be managed more effectively to offer quiet spaces for all children who need to rest or sleep.

Permission to administer medications were well recorded. These records could be further developed to share the reason why 'as and when' medications had been given, to support effective management of children's health conditions. For example, detailing the circumstances, signs and symptoms that prompted the medication to be given.

Some children in the nursery benefitted from staff using enhanced communication methods such as signing and use of symbols. The service should continue to develop this to ensure a more consistent approach across rooms to support effective communication for all children in the service.

Some parents raised concerns about the consistency and levels of staffing. Comments included: "This is an area needing some love. It would be great to see more staff to ensure all the children are given individual attention and can approach staff without waiting" and "Short staffed a lot and always different staff." Staff told us they were always working within ratios, but were sometimes stretched to meet the needs of the children. During our observations we always found the service to be in ratio and staff were meeting children's immediate needs, for example responding to distress. However, there were often times when staff were pulled away from interactions with children to respond to needs. This meant there were often missed opportunities to complete rich experiences and respond to learning opportunities for some children.

The majority of families agreed that they had a positive relationship with the staff caring for their child. One parent commented "Some of the staff are very friendly and welcoming, some of the staff do not engage much at pick up or drop off." Staff were very positive about building relationships with families to support them to provide consistent care and support. We saw conversations at drop off and pick up times where useful information was shared. In some rooms information like how much children had eaten was shared helping families to feel involved in their child's day and plan for their needs at home. Parents generally felt well connected with the nursery however some identified that the timings for engagement sessions could be better planned to take account of parents working.

## 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

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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