

# Edzell Nursery Ltd

## Day Care of Children

St.James' Church  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
19 April 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Edzell Nursery Ltd

**Service provider number:**  
SP2006008686

**Service no:**  
CS2006139302

## About the service

Edzell Nursery Ltd is registered to provide an early learning and childcare service to 30 children aged between two and half years to entry into primary school at any one time.

The service is provided from St. James Church in the Inverleith area of Edinburgh and offers funded childcare to eligible children. The service makes use of the main hall, toilets, a cloakroom and has access to two smaller rooms, a kitchen, and a large outdoor space for outdoor play. The service benefits from good transport links, nearby parks and amenities. The Children benefit from regular trips to Eagle Lodge Residential home, Inverleith Park, the Botanical gardens and Starbank park for a variety of interesting learning activities.

The service operates during school term time only, between the hours of 08:30 and 15:00, and 08:30 and 12:30 on Fridays.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 16 April between the hours of 09:00 and 12:45. We returned to complete the inspection on Wednesday 17 April between the hours of 08:20 and 15:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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 and received feedback from 14 parents
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily routines
- reviewed documents relating to children's care and learning and the management of the service.

We gave feedback by videocall to the service on Friday 19 April 2024. In attendance were members of the management team, the provider, and a representative from City of Edinburgh Council.

**Key messages**

Genuine warmth and connection underpinned practice which resulted in happy, nurtured and confident children.

A wide range of opportunities were available to stimulate, intrigue and bring joy to children's play and learning.

Genuine celebration of diversity and inclusion, independence and nurture underpinned the vision of the service and was a key strength.

The team were supported and enabled effectively to motivate them in improvement planning, resulting in enhanced outcomes for children.

Quality assurance systems needed reviewed to ensure they were leading to clear development outcomes and that any strategies of support or health and medication needs of children were safely and effectively met.

Children regularly benefitted from a variety of opportunities to learn outdoors through connections with their local community. For example, at Eagle Lodge Residential Home as well as in a variety of local parks.

**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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very 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

Children were consistently nurtured and supported throughout their daily experiences. They were happy and engaged throughout all areas of the nursery. Staff interacted with warmth and kindness and were responsive to children making them feel loved, valued and heard. One family told us, "The nursery really cares for my child and fosters a great spirit of caring within the children". This reflected the overall vision of the nursery and contributed to an overall sense of calm throughout the day.

There was a core staff team who knew children and families well. Strong bonds and relationships enhanced children's feeling of safety and security. Interactions between staff and children were respectful and showed a genuine interest and curiosity in children's ideas and experiences. There was a strong, collaborative approach with families which meant all were invested in ensuring children's needs were met. One told us, "The staff are so warm and kind and show such interest in my child's wellbeing. It feels like a real partnership between us and the staff to take the best care of our little ones". This family centred culture increased children's confidence and enhanced wellbeing. Children told us they liked being at nursery. One said, "I love playing in the home corner with my favourite friends!" and another said, "I love my nursery, I like everything".

Experiences with food were relaxed, unhurried opportunities for children to eat, socialise, and learn new skills at their own pace. They were nutritious and prepared according to national guidelines. Staff sat with children during snack and lunch times which promoted communication and language development and kept children safe in case of exposure to any potential hazards such as allergies or choking. Some staff ate with the children which provided role modelling and good discussions around food. Children had opportunities to promote their independence and responsibility as they were fully involved in preparing snacks as well as in washing and clearing away dishes. Well established routines such as these gave children a further sense of security.

Children's overall wellbeing was generally being supported through personal planning. Children had access to parts of their personal plan enabling them to reflect on past learning experiences with their peers. This enhanced children's communication development, gave them pride in their achievements and provided a sense of fun as they looked at their photos. Plans enabled staff to respond sensitively and compassionately to changes in a child's life as they included details of children's wishes, needs, preferences, and some included strategies for additional support.

Families were involved in the planning process, which ensured effective information sharing and meant children were getting the support they needed to reach their potential. One family told us, "Staff are person centred in their approach and seek our views on our child's progress and developmental needs. We always know that there is an openness to us working together and that our views are taken into consideration and feed into the plans made for our child".

There were some aspects of personal plans that could be improved, particularly around quality assuring clear development outcomes and the clarity of reviews. We will report on this further within key question 3, "How good is our leadership?".

Where children needed medication, it was stored according to good practice. However, improvements need to be made around the quality assurance of medication to ensure all medication required was present in the service, and that expiry dates were planned for. This would help to ensure children's were safe. We will report on this further within key question 3 "How Good is our Leadership?".

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

Children were having fun as they experienced high quality play, learning and development opportunities. They were meaningfully and actively involved in leading their play and learning through a free flow play and learning environment. Opportunities promoting choice and independence were available through a balance of spontaneous and planned high quality experiences, for example within themes around insects and creatures. Families told us that the nursery and staff facilitated, "making friends; connecting with teachers; (learning) new skills, experiences and encouraging responsibilities". Staff were always on hand to step in and help when required but there was a strong ethos of fostering and scaffolding independence and responsibility, giving children very good opportunities to learn for themselves.

Spaces throughout the environment gave opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills and the interactions by staff reinforced this. A good example of this was the use of children's written names used throughout the day for letter exposure. This was meaningful to them and gave them an authentic purpose to read. Numeracy was also enhanced through opportunities such as measuring scales, clocks, and experiences such as dough making, where children had to count and measure ingredients, and discussed concepts such as more and less, and bigger and smaller.

Creativity and discovery were central to the ethos of play and learning. Children used a combination of open-ended resources to explore, discover and design. For example, one child approached a staff member to show them a creation they had started in the arts and crafts area. The staff member skilfully extended this using effective questioning, praise, and encouragement. The child felt validated, and explored problem solving skills as they discussed their next steps. Interactions such as these were enriching children's wellbeing, extending their imagination, and enhancing their creative and design skills.

Planning systems supported and promoted children's progress. Planned learning experiences followed children's interests which enhanced engagement in children. During inspection, children and staff were investigating and exploring questions around dragonflies and insects with wings using digital technologies, and later children told us, "We're going to hunt for them outside!" Allowing children the freedom to extend and follow their interests in this way created a sense of wonder and was motivating children to learn at their own pace.

Planning was informed by informal observations of children, and more intentionally through themes around the diversity and celebrations relevant to staff, families and children who attended the setting. The celebration of diversity was a strength, where a variety of cultures and different family structures were celebrated and represented. Recent examples of learning included families coming in to share their own cultural celebrations, and "visiting" the countries where different children and staff were from. This was remarked upon by many families, one telling us that a nursery strength was "exposure to different cultures and interesting people". Another told us they felt a real strength of the nursery was being "inclusive and celebrating of diversity". Many praised the fostering of an inclusive environment where staff paid attention to "the individual characteristics of each child and family".

Floor books evidenced learning around broad areas, as well as children's participation in environmental initiatives such as litter picking and gardening. There was a clear chain of planned experiences to answer children's questions, and the service had referred to global initiatives such as the Global Goals for sustainable development (United Nations 2015). Exposure and learning around these big themes of diversity and sustainability was encouraging children to think in terms of citizenship and their responsibilities and rights within the world. One family stated, "Edzell is a wonderful, inclusive nursery that celebrates cultural and individual difference and embraces each child for who they are, fostering their independence and helping them to grow in so many different ways".

The service had introduced new systems to track children's progress more formally. This was beginning to form an approach that was child centred, responsive to children's interests and beginning to highlight next steps for learning.

To further secure children's progress, staff could more clearly link next steps into planning. Some next steps for learning had been identified but were yet to be reflected on and progressed. Taking this further step would enable staff to extend children's achievements and reflect on how they could develop the spaces and experiences within the nursery and their interactions to secure progress in children. Although parents overwhelmingly felt involved in the nursery and their child's development, we discussed how the service could share these assessments of children's learning more formally with families. This would ensure parents were fully involved and be further empowered to be partners in their children's learning.

**How good is our setting?****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 2.2: Children experience quality facilities**

Children were welcomed into an inviting, bright, calm setting. Resources were easily accessible enabling children to lead their own learning. There was plenty of light and ventilation with free flow access to the outdoors area. The environment was sensitively structured to take account of children's age and stage of development and learning, while offering a broad range of development opportunities. Distinct play spaces were set up, reflecting children's interests and curiosities, and they provided a variety of opportunities to explore, construct, and create. Also present were the 'practical life activities' relevant to the ethos of the setting's Montessori philosophy of learning and teaching. This enabled staff to target areas of learning to secure children's progress in different areas, such as motor development. There were also cosy areas for children to relax.

Moving forwards, staff could consider how to increase exposure to literacy and numeracy opportunities throughout the environment. Examples such as books throughout areas reflecting what is within the spaces, clipboards and a variety of mark making materials throughout different areas may be some examples. Other areas to reflect on are further opportunities to engage in sensory learning indoors, such as sand and water play.

Outdoors was an attractive and inviting area which provided a wealth of opportunities for children to engage in physical play and development. Opportunities to construct, balance, slide, and ride bikes were available, providing a range of motor development opportunities. Wellbeing was supported with rope swings as children used these for both fun and rest. Children watered plants and flowers they had planted, giving them authentic learning experiences of lifecycles. Other children engaged in sensory play with sand and water or were creating imaginative pieces with loose part resources. Some children were deeply engaged in exploring scientific concepts around movement and gravity using balls and cars with pipes and tubes. Some enjoyed being creative and exploring with different colours and paints on outdoor easels, and one child told us, "I just love this!". Having access to such a range of opportunities was resulting in fun, high quality play and learning experiences for children.

Children were being kept safe by the recording and auditing of any accidents and incidents, and these were shared with families. Children and staff washed hands regularly and staff engaged in touch point cleaning throughout the day which meant children were kept safe from the spread of infection. Risk assessments were also in place to protect children from harm and all families who responded to our survey for feedback expressed how much they felt their children were in safe hands. One told us, "I feel my child is safe, happy and secure when I leave them there". Children talked to us about rules in place to keep them safe, and more importantly, why they were in place. For example, one told us when they are eating, they must, "sit, chew, swallow and then talk", and another told us, "If we want to run, we go outside. If we run inside, we might hurt ourselves or someone else". This showed children were empowered to assess risks for themselves, an essential skill for them as they continue to grow and develop.

## How good is our leadership?

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 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are well led

A shared vision, values, and aims positively informed practice. Children benefited from a team with a caring, inclusive ethos and a commitment to getting it right for the families attending. Compassion, being curious, fostering independence and the celebration of diversity underpinned daily life and was consistently modelled by staff. This showed a shared understanding of what was important for the setting to meet the needs of children and families. The calm, happy and industrious atmosphere of the nursery reflected this.

Leaders created a culture of improvement with distributed areas of leadership through the team and a shared improvement plan. Staff felt confident to initiate well considered change and shared responsibility for the process. For example, one staff member was undertaking learning in how to deliver opportunities for children in woodwork to improve learning across a broad range of developmental areas. Peer to peer observations of practice were beginning to highlight areas of strength as well as areas for development that would be taken forward as a team. Appraisals and one to one meetings were highlighting areas to take forward to improve outcomes for children, such as more intensive training on formal observations of children's assessment of learning.

Children and family's views were actively sought to inform improvement or the development of the setting, and families told us they felt involved. One told us, "There is frequent consultation with both children and families on any planned changes or developments". The service had recently sent their own questionnaires to families which would inform parts of the improvement plan moving forward, and many families remarked on the strong sense of community within the nursery, where they felt their views and opinions were heard.

Children's views were sought on the spaces and experiences within the setting, for example, improvements had recently been made to the lunch time experience based on staff and children working together to make this a more enjoyable experience. There was scope for self-evaluation activities to be more formally reflected on to bring about continuous positive change in outcomes for children and families. Looking at ways of measuring change would enable the service to fully understand the impact of any changes made. We signposted the staff team to the Care Inspectorate Hub for support with this.

Quality assurance procedures were in place and mostly leading to improvements. Staff were knowledgeable about priorities for improvement and their role in them. This shared approach to improvement meant that staff were invested and the impact of this was visible in areas such as planning experiences and spaces within the environment. Leaders had also highlighted training needs in early language development through quality assurance of observations with staff and had put this in place.

There were some gaps and inconsistencies in quality assurance procedures which had the potential to impact on children's outcomes. Examples were in children's personal planning and in the management of medication, specifically around ensuring effective, clear and timely reviews. Specific strategies of support or areas for targeting development and learning in children in personal plans were unclear, and this had the potential for missed opportunities in securing progress in children's care, support, and learning. Clarifying these would allow staff to evolve to children's needs over time, and allow for a record of success and achievement. Reviews were not clearly documented, and this meant staff may not be effectively planning for progress over time. Documents must show reviews that are in line with legislative requirements.

Quality assurance of medication reviews should be improved to ensure medication is always in the setting where required, and that expiry dates are effectively planned for, allowing families time to replace any out-of-date medication. Information forms guiding staff on stepped approaches, dosage and administration should be kept with the medication to ensure everyone understands quickly how to manage the medication safely and effectively.

The service must ensure that any required recruitment checks are carried out in a timely way to ensure they are compliant with their responsibilities. We signposted the service to 'Safer recruitment, better recruitment' (Care Inspectorate 2023).

The service should ensure quality assurance processes are effective in improving aspects of the provision for children (**see area for improvement 1**).

### Areas for improvement

1. To ensure consistent high quality outcomes for children, the provider should ensure quality assurance systems are improved.

This should include, but is not limited to, documenting and evaluating any specific, focused areas of learning, or any strategies of support in personal plans; and using systems such as reminders on a quality assurance calendar to ensure the management of medication meets best practice guidelines. This includes ensuring any medication is checked in to the service effectively, expiry dates are planned for, and reviews take place within recommended timescales. Information guiding staff on how to administer medication safely and effectively should also be stored with the medication, and quality assured to promote consistency and continuity of care. Safe recruitment procedures should be quality assured robustly to ensure appropriate checks have been carried out prior to staff starting their role.

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

**'As a child, I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance systems' (HSCS 4.19).**

## How good is our staff team?

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 4.3: Staff deployment

Deployment and levels of staff were effective in ensuring high quality outcomes for children. Staff were flexible and were led by children's choices and movements. There was a natural flow to staff engagement with children where relationships and interactions could flourish. Children were cared for by warm, knowledgeable, and fun staff, who were available when children needed them. This gave children a strong sense that they were valued.

Busy times of the day were well planned for with allocated people on the door at start and finish times to enable discussion with families, and lunch times where staff were all on hand to support and engage with children. Leaders appropriately delegated but were very present within the room to step in and support where needed. This was noted as an area of strength from the staff team who felt very supported in their roles. Staff kept areas of responsibility for the different experiences and spaces within the room which allowed for a shared responsibility for children's learning.

Children's care and learning benefitted from a strong team of staff who brought a mix of experience, knowledge, and skills. A strength of the setting was the creative and proactive deployment of staff around their own unique skill sets, knowledge, experience, and interests. For example, in areas such as the development of the outdoors, in arts and crafts and woodwork, or in the sharing of knowledge around support strategies such as Sign along. This kept the team motivated, challenged and invested in improving outcomes for children.

Staff were calm and relaxed, but also vigilant, which contributed to the overall calm atmosphere of the nursery and provided children with good role models. Staff communicated to each other when a task took them away from their area of responsibility, such as when they went to get a basket of resources to support with a story. This meant staff worked collaboratively to ensure effective supervision and high-quality engagement with children across the day. Peer reviews will enhance staff practice further, and wellbeing meetings, and appraisals continue to support staff skills, their professional development as well as their own health. This contributed to enhanced outcomes for children as everyone worked together with a shared commitment to wellbeing, improvement and development.

## Complaints

## 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	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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