

# Summarised inspection findings

**Newington Nursery**

The City of Edinburgh Council

1 October 2024

## Key contextual information

Newington Nursery is located within Mayfield Salisbury Church in the Grange area of South Edinburgh. The nursery accommodation includes a spacious playroom and two outdoor areas, one of which is accessed directly from the playroom. Equipment and resources have to be packed away at the end of each day as the playroom space is used each evening by community groups. The nursery is managed by a Parent Board of four trustees. It is staffed by a recently appointed manager and seven early years practitioners, two of whom are employed to support additional learning needs. The nursery is registered for 24 children aged three to five years attending at any one time. There are currently 17 children on the roll. Children access their 1140 hours by attending each day, during term time only, from 8.15 am to 2.30 pm.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

**good**

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Across the nursery all children are settled, happy and enthusiastic about their learning. Almost all show high levels of engagement, and many persevere with their activities. All children lead their own learning and show creativity and imagination as they explore both indoors and outside. Practitioners demonstrate a commitment to children's rights and value and respect children as competent learners. Children confidently make choices about what they will play with and where they will play.
- Practitioners have developed positive, nurturing relationships with children. They listen attentively to children and are responsive to their needs and interests. Practitioners have developed 'Golden Rules', with the children, to support them to behave kindly towards their friends and to resolve disagreements calmly. As a result, children play well together, sharing, cooperating and showing empathy for each other.
- Practitioners use questioning and commentary well to support children to think about their learning and talk about their experiences. They show skill in introducing new knowledge and vocabulary to enrich children's learning. Practitioners should continue to extend children's learning, for example by exploring what children already know and what they could learn next. The staff team plan interesting play spaces and the allotment in the outdoor area offers opportunities for planting, growing and harvesting vegetables.
- The recently appointed manager has accurately identified the improvements needed to improve learning, teaching and assessment and has implemented a clear action plan which is progressing well.
- Practitioners observe playroom learning and record children's interests and ideas. These records are then used for responsive planning, ensuring that play spaces are planned around children's developing areas of interest. Practitioners also offer more intentional planning. They

record children's responses in big books using children's drawings, comments and photographic evidence. The manager is aware of the need to keep planning approaches under review to ensure that children experience breadth and depth in their learning. Practitioners are also working to strengthen the provision for literacy and numeracy in play contexts.

- Practitioners know children well as individuals and as learners. They use the City of Edinburgh developmental milestones to track children's progress. The manager and practitioners have recognised the need to recognise and record each child's ongoing attainment and achievement more accurately. The staff team should now continue to develop and embed effective assessment approaches, relating more clearly to assessment information for individual children. This improvement will support practitioners to track progress over time and highlight where children need additional support or challenge. Staff will gain a clearer overview of how children's knowledge and skills are developing to ensure they are making the best possible progress.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The nursery submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

### 3.2 Securing children's progress

good

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- progress in communication, early language, mathematics, and health and wellbeing
- children's progress over time
- overall quality of children's achievement
- ensuring equity for all children

- Children are making good progress in early language and communication. Almost all listen well to stories and simple instructions. They regularly ask questions to clarify their understanding. They are confident communicators who display a wide-ranging vocabulary. A few children show interest in books and use props and puppets imaginatively to act out familiar stories. Most children have very good pencil control and can recognise and write their name. A majority of children are ready for greater challenge in early reading and writing to improve their progress further.
- Children are making good progress in early numeracy. Many can count to ten and beyond. They are developing mathematical skills as they measure each other's heights and order jugs and tubes by size. They are learning about capacity as they pour water into different sized containers and are developing their use of comparative expressions. To improve progress further, children need access to materials to sort, match and count, and to number symbols to recognise and write. Practitioners should offer children further experiences using number puzzles, scales, measuring equipment and timers.
- Children are making very good progress in health and wellbeing. They understand basic emotions. A visiting psychologist helped children explore different ways of regulating their feelings. Children are independent at snack and mealtimes and are aware of basic hygiene routines. Children eagerly explore obstacle courses, and many can climb, balance and jump skilfully. They use wheeled toys confidently and understand the safety rules, for example wearing helmets. Children are forming friendships and can share resources and work collaboratively together. Through a strong focus on diversity, children are learning to celebrate and value different beliefs, customs and cultures.
- As a result of their nursery experience, confirmed from information gathered from learning journals, children are making good progress across all areas of the curriculum. Children who need additional support for learning are making appropriate progress in relation to their individual developmental stage. The manager plans to improve the format of children's personal plans to ensure all children are well supported socially and emotionally.
- Practitioners use praise effectively to encourage children and to celebrate their success. The nursery manager has well considered plans to encourage families to celebrate and share children's wider achievements through an online platform.

- Practitioners have created a supportive and highly inclusive ethos that promotes equity. They know families and their context well. They are pro-active in identifying potential barriers to learning and support families to access a range of specialist agencies. Parents contribute by sharing a wide range of their skills with the children. The manager is actively working to offer a wider range of family learning opportunities.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were nurtured and supported throughout their daily experiences by calm, kind and compassionate interactions from staff. For example, children benefited from responsive discussions, comfort, reassurance and personal care. Children were actively listened to and staff responded appropriately and with genuine interest, making children feel valued.

Daily routines such as mealtimes, had a relaxed flow to them. This enabled individual children's needs to be catered for. For example, mealtimes had a rolling approach for children to choose when they wanted to eat. Children developed skills and independence around food through preparing, self-serving and choosing which snacks to have. There were times when some children were still eating and staff began the practical task of tidying up. This could impact on staff awareness and response to potential choking incidents. The service should continue to develop safe and positive mealtimes by further respecting children's pace of eating.

Personal care such as nappy changing, did not always reflect a rights-based, dignified approach. For example, on occasions nappy changing was carried out on the floor of the toilet. This was unhygienic for the child and did not give them a strong sense that their comfort mattered. We referred the manager to 'Nappy changing for early learning and childcare settings (excluding childminders)' (Care Inspectorate 2024) to guide improvements in this area.

Children's individual wellbeing was not yet fully benefiting from effective use of personal planning. All children had a personal plan containing permissions, contact information, needs and preferences from parents. These were reviewed twice yearly to ensure the information was up to date. While staff could talk through the supports in place for specific children, the personal plans did not fully reflect these nor did they monitor effectiveness. Overall, children were having their immediate needs met however gaps were evident which would impact on consistency and effectiveness in the longer term. The manager had identified these gaps and was working to address them.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported as their medication and health needs were being managed according to best practice. We discussed further ways to improve administration of medication records and reviews with parents to avoid any potential duplication of information.

**Care Inspectorate evaluation: good**

### 1.3 Play and learning

Children had fun as they experienced some quality play, learning and development opportunities. A wide variety of resources and play spaces offered children scope to experiment and create. Real items and open-ended materials brought an authenticity to their play. Children used spaces as they wished, transporting materials to extend their ideas. For example, mixing the sand and water to explore the changing properties.

Children were empowered to lead their own learning through the skilled interactions and actions of staff. Most children engaged in quality play in small groups where they had opportunities to negotiate, lead and follow, problem solve and celebrate their own achievements. Staff involvement was mostly intentional and purposeful which added value for children. For example, effective questioning enabled children to consider, reflect, solve and recall knowledge during their play. To

further develop play and learning, the service should consider how to extend and challenge children at their own pace.

Children could free flow to the garden throughout the session so could choose where to play. The closed door was an inhibitor for some children and so solutions should be explored with the landlord. The garden offered space and freedom in a natural environment. The space should continue to develop so children feel intrigued and inspired for sustained play. Other outdoor opportunities included planting, growing and harvesting which led to cooking and eating. This opportunity provided a range of skills children could use in the future. Previously, children took part in outings to build connections to their local community, such as forest school sessions, library visits and shopping locally. The service was planning to reinstate these experiences.

Planning for learning had improved, with children's interests starting to inform intentional plans. However, children's learning and progress was not yet being tracked and monitored. Online observations were not yet capturing significant learning for individual children. Therefore, staff were unable to fully respond to individual learning needs of children and extend where appropriate. For example, providing challenge in writing skills for children who may show an interest. This had already been identified by the service and action was being taken to improve the tracking and monitoring of children's learning.

**Care Inspectorate evaluation: good**

### **3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well**

A shared vision, values and aims were positively informing practice. The new manager brought an energy to the team, where staff were celebrated and their skills recognised and used to benefit children. For example, growing and harvesting food. The team demonstrated motivation and commitment to getting it right for the families they worked with. They reflected on their practice and aspects of the provision, adapting to suit children's needs where appropriate. Parents reported their overall satisfaction with the service, suggesting their needs were being met by shared values.

Children and parents were starting to be involved and have influence in the service. Capturing children's voices had been prioritised which involved them in reviewing the play spaces and making decisions. Plans to involve parents more formally in evaluation were at an early stage, however the manager understood the importance of progressing this.

Quality assurance, including self-evaluation and improvement plans, were developing and had led to some improvements. The manager and the board had assessed the strengths and areas for development in the service and were starting to address these. Some areas had been actioned and were starting to show enhanced outcomes for children. For example, changes to the environment layout and resources had led to prolonged quality play. Other areas were being planned for and had yet to be actioned in the short timescale the manager had been in post. For example, gaps in personal planning and the quality of online observations to monitor and track children's learning.

The manager should continue to develop a range of quality assurance processes to identify improvement areas and action them. Some issues were highlighted during inspection which quality assurance should identify. For example, supervision during mealtimes should be sustained until all children have finished eating to enhance safety.

Further plans were in place to create a more shared leadership approach across the team. This would empower staff to have ownership on aspects of service improvement. The team



demonstrated capacity and drive to improve outcomes for children and were committed to continue on their improvement journey.

### Care Inspectorate evaluation: good

During the previous Care Inspectorate inspection, the setting had one requirement and no areas for improvement. The one requirement was met. This resulted in enhanced health and wellbeing of children through effective infection prevention and control measures. As a result of this inspection, there are no requirements and no areas for improvement.

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.