

Frogston Primary Early Learning and Childcare

Day Care of Children

Frogston Primary School
29 Achnacarry Street
EDINBURGH
EH17 8GP

Telephone: 0131 529 3738

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

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Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
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About the service

Frogston Primary Early Learning and Childcare is provided by City of Edinburgh Council. It is situated within a housing estate on the edge of the City (South East).

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 80 children not yet attending primary school at any one time no more than 15 are aged two years to under three years.

The setting is provided from a wing of Frogston Primary school. The service has a designated entrance, which leads to a spacious cloakroom. The open plan playroom, which can be separated into smaller rooms if required, leads to a large outdoor play area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between 20 and 21 June 2023. 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 the registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the service was registered.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with a small group of children using the service and three of their family members
- spoke with staff and management
- we reviewed feedback surveys from six staff and 19 children's family members
- observed staff practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Children were engaged in their play and preferred to play near staff.
- The service was welcoming and staff were friendly.
- Children were confident choosing to play either indoors or outdoors, which they could access freely.
- The open plan design of the the setting should be reviewed to ensure it provides high quality experiences to meet the needs of the children.
- Mealtimes were well planned and relaxed. Children were confident self serving and helping their friends sitting around the dining tables.
- Plans were in place to improve how the service monitored children's progress.
- The new personal plans being introduced should support staff to better identify and plan how best to support children's needs.
- Communication with families could be further enhanced to provide more meaningful and regular updates on children's experiences.
- Leaders within the setting had a good understanding of the service strengths and areas for improvement.
- Opportunities for staff to meet to discuss their day to day work could be improved.

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?	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?

4 - Good

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

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were mostly settled and happy within the service. Most children were engaged in their play, preferring to play in areas where staff were based. Interaction between staff, children and their peers were positive and kind. There were a few occasions when children needed some one to one support from staff. At these times staff deployment could have been better. For example, on one occasion, a child was a little unsettled and getting frustrated, the child continued to move around the setting. As a result, several staff provided care and support, impacting on the opportunity for that nurturing one to one care being provided.

Transitions for children were well planned to ensure their wellbeing needs were met. Personalised plans were put in place to support new children when they started and when children moved into primary one. Staff worked closely with families to ensure children's needs were being met. Parents found staff to be caring and supportive, with one parent sharing 'My child settled well into the nursery and the routine, taking only a few days to do so' and another told us how staff truly supported their family when they started and how this had continued.

Children and families were welcomed into the service and staff had been proactive in building positive relationships. They had achieved this through welcoming families to attend stay and play sessions, forest school sessions and to participate in events such as storytelling. Parents really welcomed these opportunities.

Most parents felt they were given good quality information about their child's day, however some parents felt that the daily communications could be further improved. Parents comments ranged from 'They are a fantastic, caring set of staff in a wonderful environment. Their communication is great and they have nurtured our child and cared for them' to 'There's never any feedback at pick up time, no handover, no real chance to build a rapport with staff and parent'. After reviewing the evidence in relation to how parents were kept informed of their child's day, we discussed the need for some improvements. For example, increasing parents time to speak to their child's keyworker. The leaders agreed to review this.

Each child had a personal plan in place. We were informed following a review, new personal plans were being introduced to improve how staff identified and planned how best to support children's needs. In addition with support from the early years teacher the service was developing a new planning system to support the recording of children's progress. An improved planning system should help staff to clearly identify children's needs and ensure the right care and support is provided to meet these.

1.3 Play and learning

The quality of the play and learning experiences offered throughout the day varied in areas. Most areas, including the block play, outdoors and woodwork areas provided challenge, exploration and creativity for children to pursue their own ideas and were well used by children. Other areas that were used less, could be further improved to inspire children's play and learning, such as the story and home corner. Monitoring of children's experiences should continue to ensure they provide a well balanced and well planned curriculum throughout the setting.

Although the systems in place supported a child led ethos, we agreed that the planning cycle needed further development. Planning play and learning experiences for children aged between two years and those starting school, within a large open plan playroom had its challenges. Staff were growing in confidence and continued to reflect on how best they used the space and resources to meet children's needs. Staff comments included 'in our centre the child is the centre of our planning, even sometimes is difficult to please everyone in a free flow space I am confident in our approach and ethos to support children needs' and 'We have good communication between staff, but not enough time weekly to discuss the plan or paperwork'. We concluded that staff needed more time designated to planning children's care, play and learning. The leaders agreed to try and find solutions to this.

The new responsive planning was at the early stages of being developed. As a result, most children were leading their own play and learning and being supported by staff as needed. A few children, at times, were seen wandering around, swiftly moving between play and having limited positive interaction with staff. Further improvement is needed to ensure all children's experience high quality care, play and learning. The leaders agreed to reflect on the impact of this.

Solutions to the challenges included time for staff to discuss day to day issues and how they planned and evaluated children's experiences need to be found. The service needs to review how well the space and staff deployment meets the needs of the children and have a clear plan on how to address where improvements are needed. We have made this an area for improvement (see area for improvement one).

Areas for improvement

1. Children should experience high quality care and support that meets their needs. To achieve this children should have access to well planned care, play and learning experiences. This should include, but not be limited to, children:

- being provided with experiences that meet their needs
- having fun as the play and learn
- being enabled to direct their own play
- having access to suitable resources for their age and stage
- being cared for in a service that is the right size
- a well planned space that makes them feel safe, secure and nurtured.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which states "my care and support meets my needs and is right for me" (HSCS 1.19) and ' as a child, 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 for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity , learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

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.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The facilities, being newly purpose built, had resulted in children being cared for in a new, clean and well presented setting. Now the building had been in use, the service had identified some areas that would benefit from further development.

This included securing the doors children used to access the garden, need for shelter in outdoor spaces, unblocking the drain in outdoor natural puddle pool and hand washing sink in designated eating area. We agreed, and have asked the service to follow these up.

The key strength to the facilities is that the space can be used as one large open plan space or as separate spaces, through the dividing doors being closed. Children can have direct access to the large outdoor area through several doors leading from the playroom. The service regularly reviewed the use of space and, since opening, have used it in different ways.

At the time of the inspection, the whole space was open plan and free flowing. We could see many positive impacts for children, including making choices to play in preferred areas, moving inside or out with ease and having access to a wide range of play experiences. They had created a sensory space in the entrance hall, children could only access this if staff supervised,. We discussed if this large open plan space provided the right environment for all children. This included, was it providing small cosy areas where children could rest and feel secure? Were staff able to observe and track children's experiences and was it right for the youngest children. These suggested areas for improvement have been recorded under key question How good is our care, play and learning,(area for improvement one).

The large reception area allowed parents to be welcomed into the setting to drop off and collect their children. The additional space, currently used for lending library and private space for meetings was well used. We discussed the option to improve parental communications with key staff, parents being welcomed into the playroom. The leaders agreed to consider this.

The setting was part of the primary school they were attached to. The service was working hard to create positive links between the early years setting and the primary one children. For example, both groups of children had access to the same outdoor space. This provided positive outcomes for the children getting to know the primary one teachers, children accessing more learning experiences and some siblings getting to play together. We did raise that when all children were outside, this created a very busy area and some of the play experiences were not as meaningful. The service had identified this and had a plan in place for next term to address these. The plan was to have more planned focus shared time, rather than the free flow currently in place.

Children toilets and nappy changing facilities were accessed through the cloakroom area. Children could freely access the toilets and most children did so independently. We did see, on several occasions, children's right to dignity and privacy needed improved, as toilet doors were not always closed over, as a result you could see directly into this area from the cloakroom. The senior staff agreed to consider how this could be addressed. Staff told us that on occasions, they felt ventilation in the main nappy changing area could be improved. We have asked management to look into this.

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.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service had a clear vision for the service. The leaders had a good understanding of how well the service was doing and had evaluated the service performance using good practice documents. Since registration they had been working hard making improvements.

This included building a strong staff team, making best use of space and resources and parental involvement in the service. They had made good progress, however some further improvements were still needed, for example, keeping parents informed about children's experiences and progress.

The leaders were committed to ensuring the identified areas for improvement were actioned and outcomes for children continued to improve. With the support from the City of Edinburgh Early Years Team, the service planned to improve how they planned and supported children's play and learning experiences in partnership with parents and carers.

Staff had been involved in making the improvements within the setting. The staff challenge groups were making good progress in their key areas of the curriculum. They had been instrumental in developing, for example the lending library and stay and play sessions. Staff should continue to be involved in the service improvement journey, ensuring they make best use of their knowledge and experience. Staff need more time and resources to reflect and make positive changes.

The service had worked hard to involve the parents and carers and children's voices within the service. They regularly sought views and opinions and used these to make positive changes. Most parents told us they were involved in a meaningful way to share their views and influence change. The leaders should continue to consult with parents to ensure how they communicate and involve parents to meet their expectations.

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.

4.3 Staff deployment

We found that adult to child ratios were maintained. There were a few occasions, where staff deployment could be improved to enhance children's care, play and learning. For example, monitoring children's daily experiences to ensure their needs were met and ensure strategies to support children's individual needs were consistently followed. Parents found staff to be welcoming and friendly, however some felt the time allocated for daily communication about their child's day could be improved. The leaders have agreed to consider how staff are deployed throughout the building, to ensure they provide high quality care.

Staff were of mixed experience and had varied knowledge of child development. Staff had shown commitment to develop their skills and knowledge and were working hard to gain consistency in the quality of staffing. Staff told us they needed more time to reflect and discuss the quality of service they provide. Through strong leadership, good role modelling and further staff development, staff skills and knowledge should continue to grow. To achieve this, staff need time to reflect, discuss and agree on where improvements can be made.

Staff communications and interactions were nurturing and respectful. We saw children tended to play where staff were based and asked staff to play with them. Staff were a strong team and have children at the heart of the service. Although the layout and size of the service has challenges, the staff worked hard to create and provide a nurturing and caring, fun place for children to play and learn. Staff were happy in their roles and felt they worked well as a team and were supported by senior staff.

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?	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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