

# Care service inspection report

Full inspection

## George Watson's College Day Care of Children

67-71 Colinton Road  
Edinburgh



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

Service provided by: The Merchant Company Education Board

Service provider number: SP2003003566

Care service number: CS2003016179

Inspection Visit Type: Unannounced

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and set out improvements that must be made. We also investigate complaints about care services and take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

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## Summary

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change after this inspection following other regulatory activity. For example, if we have to take enforcement action to make the service improve, or if we investigate and agree with a complaint someone makes about the service.

### We gave the service these grades

Quality of care and support	6	Excellent
Quality of environment	6	Excellent
Quality of staffing	6	Excellent
Quality of management and leadership	6	Excellent

### What the service does well

Skilled and experienced staff have worked together to provide a stimulating, welcoming and fun learning environment for children. The views of children and their families are valued and used to ensure that the day to day experience of children supports their learning and developmental needs and interests.

### What the service could do better

The provider should look for ways to further develop their existing excellent practice.

### What the service has done since the last inspection

Since the last inspection took place on-going refurbishment of the premises has taken place. Toys and other resources have been updated and added to. Staff have continued to be given excellent training and support opportunities. Children and parents have significantly influenced the continuous development of the service.

**Conclusion**

The skilled and experienced staff are provided with strong leadership which supports them in their joint aim of providing a service which values children and puts their needs and interests at the heart of service delivery.

# 1 About the service we inspected

The Care Inspectorate regulates care services in Scotland. Information about all care services is available on our website at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

The service was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011.

The Care Inspectorate is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all children receiving a care service to ensure they get the best start in life, are ready to succeed and lead longer, healthier lives. The Care Inspectorate had an important role to play in supporting this approach in inspecting care services for children.

The Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. It's a consistent way for people to work with all children and young people. The approach helps practitioners focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people - and how they can act to help deliver these improvements. GIRFEC is being threaded through all existing policy, strategy, and legislation affecting children, young people and their families.

In Scotland, the GIRFEC approach puts wellbeing at the very heart of its approach. The eight 'indicators' of wellbeing that form the basis of GIRFEC are - safe, healthy, Achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included - often referred to as SHANARRI.

The service is registered to provide a service to :

A maximum of 112 children aged three years to primary school age, with a maximum of 64 children in the Lower Primary Nursery Facility and a maximum of 48 children in the New Myreside House.

The service is part of George Watson's College. The nursery operates from two sites within the school. Both sites consist of playrooms, toilets and kitchen facilities with direct access to fully enclosed outdoor play areas. Children also have access to the resources of the school, they include sports halls, library and the wider school grounds.

At the time of the inspection there were 88 children on the services register, attending each day of the week during term time.

## Recommendations

A recommendation is a statement that sets out actions that a care service provider should take to improve or develop the quality of the service, but where failure to do so would not directly result in enforcement.

Recommendations are based on the National Care Standards, SSSC codes of practice and recognised good practice. These must also be outcomes-based and if the provider meets the recommendation this would improve outcomes for people receiving the service.

## Requirements

A requirement is a statement which sets out what a care service must do to improve outcomes for people who use services and must be linked to a breach in the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (the "Act"), its regulations, or orders made under the Act, or a condition of registration. Requirements are enforceable in law.

We make requirements where (a) there is evidence of poor outcomes for people using the service or (b) there is the potential for poor outcomes which would affect people's health, safety or welfare.

Based on the findings of this inspection this service has been awarded the following grades:

**Quality of care and support - Grade 6 - Excellent**

**Quality of environment - Grade 6 - Excellent**

**Quality of staffing - Grade 6 - Excellent**

**Quality of management and leadership - Grade 6 - Excellent**

This report and grades represent our assessment of the quality of the areas of performance which were examined during this inspection.

Grades for this care service may change following other regulatory activity. You can find the most up-to-date grades for this service by visiting our website

[www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com) or by calling us on 0345 600 9527 or visiting one of our offices.

## 2 How we inspected this service

### The level of inspection we carried out

In this service we carried out a low intensity inspection. We carry out these inspections when we are satisfied that services are working hard to provide consistently high standards of care.

### What we did during the inspection

We completed this inspection following an unannounced inspection that took place on Friday 11 September between the hours of 8:45am and 17:00pm. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

As requested by us the service sent us a completed annual return and self evaluation.

We issued fifteen Care Standards questionnaires to the service to distribute to families. Nine of these were returned to us before the inspection took place.

In this inspection we gathered evidence from various sources including the following:

We spoke with:

- Staff present on the day of the inspection.
- Children.
- Parents.

We looked at:

- Certificate of registration.
- Relevant policies and procedures.
- Children's information.
- Staff training opportunities.
- Interaction between staff and children.
- Equipment and resources in the service and in the outdoor play areas.

We took account of information in the:

- Annual return and the self evaluation.
- Questionnaires returned by families using the service.

### **Grading the service against quality themes and statements**

We inspect and grade elements of care that we call 'quality themes'. For example, one of the quality themes we might look at is 'Quality of care and support'. Under each quality theme are 'quality statements' which describe what a service should be doing well for that theme. We grade how the service performs against the quality themes and statements.

Details of what we found are in Section 3: The inspection

### **Inspection Focus Areas (IFAs)**

In any year we may decide on specific aspects of care to focus on during our inspections. These are extra checks we make on top of all the normal ones we make during inspection. We do this to gather information about the quality of these aspects of care on a national basis. Where we have examined an inspection focus area we will clearly identify it under the relevant quality statement.

### **Fire safety issues**

We do not regulate fire safety. Local fire and rescue services are responsible for checking services. However, where significant fire safety issues become apparent, we will alert the relevant fire and rescue services so they may consider what action to take. You can find out more about care services' responsibilities for fire safety at [www.firescotland.gov.uk](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk)

## The annual return

Every year all care services must complete an 'annual return' form to make sure the information we hold is up to date. We also use annual returns to decide how we will inspect the service.

**Annual Return Received:** Yes - Electronic

## Comments on Self Assessment

Every year all care services must complete a 'self assessment' form telling us how their service is performing. We check to make sure this assessment is accurate.

The service submitted a self assessment document which contained information about areas of strength and areas for further development.

## Taking the views of people using the care service into account

Many of the children had only recently taken up their place in the nursery however we found they had settled well and were confident in using the space and in relating to staff. We chatted with several children during the inspection. We found they were enthusiastic and happy to talk to us about their nursery. Children showed us their favourite areas, talked about friendships and about their plans for the day.

## Taking carers' views into account

Before the inspection took place we sent fifteen Care Standards questionnaires to the service for distribution to families. Nine of these were returned to us before the inspection took place. Parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the overall quality of the service. Individual comments from the questionnaires are included in body of the report. In addition we spoke to some parents as they dropped off and picked up their children. Without exception parents praised staff for their skills and commitment to their children and for the quality of resources and experiences in the service.

### 3 The inspection

We looked at how the service performs against the following quality themes and statements. Here are the details of what we found.

#### Quality Theme 1: Quality of Care and Support

Grade awarded for this theme: 6 - Excellent

##### Statement 1

"We ensure that service users and carers participate in assessing and improving the quality of the care and support provided by the service."

##### Service Strengths

We found that the service provided excellent evidence of how they met the areas of practice we looked at in relation to this Quality Statement.

During the inspection we:

- Talked to parents and children.
- Observed the quality of interaction between staff and children.
- Observed the quality of interaction between staff and parents.
- Looked at children's information and their folders.
- Looked at information from the Care Standards Questionnaires we sent to parents.
- Looked at information the service had gathered from parent questionnaires and other consultations.
- Observed some of the opportunities children and parents were given to influence the overall quality of service.

Parents who responded to our questionnaires were very positive about how staff met their children's care and support needs. Representative comments included "The staff are excellent both in the care/support they offer children

and in their gentle encouragement of them. "and "They provided my children with the opportunity to gain confidence and independence."

We concluded that the service demonstrated a high level of commitment to ensuring that children and their parents were given a range of opportunities to comment on and to influence the overall quality of the service they received. This resulted in excellent outcomes for children. They included:

- Open days which allowed families to visit the service, meet staff and find out more about the opportunities and experiences the service could offer children. This helped them to decide whether the service would meet their child's specific needs.

- The welcome pack gave families clear well-written information about the service. This included some of the policies and procedures supporting the service, and activities and experiences for children. The pack was illustrated with photographs of staff which helped families to remember who was who and the roles staff carried out within the service.

- Staff were on duty to welcome families into the nursery and when they were leaving at the end of the day. This provided an opportunity for informal conversations and information sharing which helped ensure that staff and families were up to date with what was happening in children's home lives and in the nursery. We spoke to parents who told us they were very happy with the opportunities they had to talk to staff both formally and informally.

- A wipe clean board at the nursery entrance gave families information about daily events. This was updated throughout the session to reflect activities children had taken part in.

- A parental involvement policy recognised the valuable contribution that parents could make to the ongoing development of the service. Parents were invited to come into the nursery as general volunteers or to share specific skills with children. This gave them the opportunity to see how the staff worked with their children at different times of the day and in different situations. This put them in a strong position to comment on staff practice.

- Parents had their own log-in password to the nursery website and the wider school website. This allowed them to access information relevant to their child, at a time that suited them. Parents told us they liked the flexibility this gave them.
- Children's smile books were displayed where they could be seen by parents and children. Families were encouraged to add information to these books which built a record of the children's time in nursery.
- The illustrated nursery newsletter included information about staff training, activities children had taken part in, fund raising and project work. The newsletter reminded parents of how they could support the nursery and welcomed their ideas and comments.
- Emails, texts, phone calls and letters were also used to support communication. This took account of the individual preferences of families about how they received information.
- Forms in the nursery foyer reminded parents of their responsibility to keep staff up to date with any changes in their child's information.
- Focused questionnaires had been used to gather information about specific aspects of the service and ways in which the service could be improved. We saw that once information had been collated it was fed back to parents along with any action plans. During the inspection we spoke to parents who told us they felt well informed about what was happening in the service and received regular feedback from questionnaires.
- Parents had regular opportunities to meet with staff through parents' consultation evenings and private meetings could also be arranged.
- The parent liaison group gave families a voice in the school through opportunities to meet with senior staff and be involved at higher level meetings. Minutes of these meetings were available to all families. The parent's association arranged social events regularly throughout the year. This included

fund raising events and the summer and winter fairs which helped families get to know one another and develop supportive links within the school community.

- The service's improvement plan, along with progress in meeting targets, was displayed in the nursery. This demonstrated the nursery's commitment to keeping parents informed and of being accountable to them.

- The Junior School head teacher held an individual meeting with every family before their child took up a place. This was an opportunity to ensure that all of the information held on children was correct and that any concerns were picked up, discussed and actioned at an early stage. We saw evidence of how these meetings had been used effectively to identify children with additional support needs and to arrange appropriate support before the children started nursery.

We found that staff were committed to supporting children to take ownership of the nursery and to be active participants in their own learning. Opportunities for this included the following:

- The children's welcome pack had been developed with input from some of the older children in the nursery. This respected their ability to contribute to the service and encouraged their sense of being a part of the school. The pack was well illustrated with photographs chosen by the children. The photographs, with associated comments, showed the children taking part in activities in the nursery and around the school.

- Every child about to start nursery received their own personal welcome invitation to the service. This acknowledged the significance of the event in their young lives and helped them to feel valued.

- Children came together in small groups to share news from home and discuss ideas for activities within the nursery. They were involved in making decisions about the layout of the room and what worked best for them. We saw that they were well supported by staff in these discussions and contributed confidently.

- We saw children voting for favourite songs, stories and other activities. This helped to encourage their social skills and ability to compromise. We could see that staff planning for activities came directly from the children's interests.

- Children had worked together to decide on the simple and sensible 'Golden Rules ' for nursery behaviour. This told us that staff respected children's ability to make decisions and take responsibility for their actions. We saw examples of children reminding one another of these rules as they played together.
- Children were supported to contribute to the children's newspaper. The 'journalists' interviewed their peers about activities and shared jokes and comments about the nursery in general.
- A children's gardening committee had been developed to decide on the redevelopment of one of the nursery gardens. They met regularly to discuss their plans and the progress they were making. We spoke to a group of children involved in this activity. They shared their plans and talked about what had to be in place to make them happen.
- We looked at floor books and topic webs which showed children's involvement in choosing topics and in thinking about what they wanted to know about their chosen subjects.

During our inspection we saw many examples of conversations between staff and children. We found that staff took an individual approach to children depending on their stage of development. They knew when to stand back to allow children to learn for themselves and when to step in with support. This helped to build the children's confidence and self-esteem.

All of the above showed that staff had high expectations of children. They understood the value of empowering children to make decisions about their environment and experiences. We saw that these opportunities contributed to children's development, self esteem, sense of belonging to the school community, and promoted their general wellbeing.

Parents who returned our questionnaires told us they agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

- I received clear information about the service before my child started using it.

- Staff shared information about my child's learning and general development with me and, where appropriate, my child.
- I am kept informed about what is happening in the service, for example through newsletters and information boards.

### Areas for improvement

In order to maintain their current excellent grades the service should continue to look for innovative ways to support parents and children to be involved in the quality of care and support in the nursery.

### Grade

6 - Excellent

**Number of requirements - 0**

**Number of recommendations - 0**

### Statement 3

"We ensure that service users' health and wellbeing needs are met."

### Service Strengths

We found excellent evidence of how the provider met the areas of practice we looked at in relation to this Quality Statement.

The Aims and Objectives of the service included the following statement: "To provide a secure and happy environment in which each child is respected as an individual whilst also learning to co-operate with others." We could see that children were happy to come into nursery. They chatted excitedly to their friends and to staff about their plans for the day. Our observations were confirmed by parents who told us "My child has bounded through the door every day and continually talks about his time in nursery.", "From the moment you walk into the nursery it has a lovely feel. Children are treated as individuals, they are continually learning new things but in a fun, engaging manner." Children going into the nursery told us "I'm playing with my friends, we're going to build a castle.", "I don't know what I'll do today, I'll wait and see what I think when I go inside." and "I've got lots of things to talk about, I'm going to play in the garden."

We found that the warm and supportive relationships staff had developed with children were one of the service's significant strengths. Staff were trained in GIRFEC and the SHANARRI principles. We could see that promoting children's health and wellbeing was firmly embedded in their practice. We asked staff to tell us about individual children's needs and interests and what they were doing to meet them. Staff were confident in their responses. We found their commitment to meeting individual needs supported the service's aims, and led to the children having a high quality experience at nursery. We saw several examples of skilled staff supporting children's development and confidence through effective use of questions and from the introduction of ideas and points for them to think about. This helped to develop children's confidence in their own abilities.

Staff had worked with children in developing the 'Golden Rules' for behaviour in the nursery. We found that children were very good at reminding one another of these rules. Where staff had to intervene to support children in disputes, for example about sharing toys and turn taking, we saw that they did this in a consistent, fair and sensitive way. Children were encouraged to think about the outcomes they wanted to achieve and how this might be done. This helped children to think about the feelings of others and develop negotiation and empathy which would support them in life as well as in the service.

Many of the parents who responded to our questionnaires praised the staff's use of 'Smile Books' to record children's achievements. We looked at samples of these books, they reflected the child led planning and the information given to us by staff about individual children's needs and interests.

Children's general health and wellbeing was well supported because the service employed a team of qualified nurses. They were responsible for ensuring that storage and administration of medication was in line with current best practice and that children who needed permanent medication had care plans which were reviewed with families at least twice a year. The medical team dealt with first aid and other medical situations and were available to consult with staff and families as required.

The service had excellent systems in place for supporting children's learning and development. As a partner provider nursery they were able to refer children

to specialist services through the City of Edinburgh Council's Department of Early Years. The school had their own specialist team of staff managed by the Head of Support for Learning who were available for consultation and worked with children as necessary, eg Speech and Language therapist, movement co-ordinator and the medical team described above. We saw examples of how early intervention and referral had been used effectively to support families and to enable children to make the most of their positive learning environment.

The service provided children with a daily snack. Staff had taken part in training in Infection Control and Food Hygiene and had a copy of the NHS Scotland healthy eating document 'Setting the Table'. We found that staff had used their knowledge and training to make sure that children's snack time was a positive experience. Children had taken part in project work around food, healthy eating and personal care. They were able to tell us why, for example, it was important to wash their hands before eating. One child offered to show us how to do this because "If you don't do it properly you won't wash all the germs away and you might get sick."

Staff had supported children to use their knowledge of healthy eating to choose and to bake some of their snack foods. Children took responsibility for helping to set up the snack area, for serving themselves and for washing their dishes. We could see that children took pride in carrying out these tasks which supported their independence and sense of achievement. Staff sat with children during snack time to offer support when needed and to encourage conversation and social skills.

The playroom and the outdoor play areas offered children a rich learning environment which supported their curiosity, and allowed them to challenge themselves physically and intellectually through the use of well chosen activities and experiences in the playroom and outdoors. Computers, iPads and electronic toys gave children opportunities to learn about technology. Literacy and numeracy opportunities were threaded through all of the activities in the playroom. The use of an area of nearby woodland provided children with regular opportunities to experience a forest schools experience which supported their appreciation and curiosity in the natural world.

The Head of Junior School was the service's child protection officer. Her role

was to ensure that policies and procedures were reviewed regularly in line with current legislation. She delivered in-house staff training updates and were responsible for ensuring that formal training took place once every three years. We found that staff had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in protecting children, and of the procedures they must follow in the event of any concerns.

### Areas for improvement

In order to maintain their current excellent grades the service should continue to look for innovative ways to support parents and children to be involved in the quality of care and support in the nursery.

### Grade

6 - Excellent

**Number of requirements - 0**

**Number of recommendations - 0**

## Quality Theme 2: Quality of Environment

Grade awarded for this theme: 6 - Excellent

### Statement 2

"We make sure that the environment is safe and service users are protected."

### Service Strengths

We found that the service provided excellent evidence of how they met the areas of practice we looked at in relation to this Quality Statement.

During the inspection we walked around all of the parts of the building and the outdoor play areas used by children. We found that the service was maintained to a very high standard and was accessible to individuals with mobility issues. Children's comfort and safety was well supported because the service employed a property manager who led an in-house maintenance team of qualified tradesmen. Staff were familiar with the system in place for reporting concerns and told us the maintenance team responded very quickly to requests and were able to deal with most issues on the day they were reported. If necessary outside contractors were brought in, but the need for this was rare.

The security of the building and children's safety was given a high priority. A car park attendant was on duty to ensure that visitors had a legitimate reason to be in the car park. Visitors were required to show identification and confirm the reason for their visit. A secure entry system helped to prevent individuals from entering the building. Visitors were met at reception where they were again required to show identification and sign a visitors book, stating the reason for their visit and the part of the school they would be in. Visitors were asked to wear a school ID badge. This helped to ensure that staff knew who was in the building and their reason for their visit.

The nursery provided a bright and welcoming environment for children. The entrance areas were well presented with children's photographs, art and project

work. Floor books were available for parents and children to look at. On the day of the inspection they included a 'Goldilocks' book of photographs from a play the children had recently taken part in and project work they had done on solving mysteries. We could see the books provided good talking points which encouraged children to share their experiences with their families and with one another. An 'I Can' tree with labels for children and parents to write about their child's achievements helped to celebrate success and build children's confidence.

The playrooms were equipped with high quality, purpose-built furniture and fittings which incorporated all the elements of core play within it. Staff had involved children in making decisions about where toys and activities should go. This helped to create a sense of ownership of the environment which supported children to settle because they were able to move around freely making their own choices. The nursery was exceptionally well resourced, and stored equipment was well labelled and easy to access. Children were given responsibility for tidying up the playroom and making sure toys and resources were stored safely. We could see that they enjoyed these activities and took their responsibilities seriously.

The nursery made very good use of interactive topic tables for discussion and exploration which changed throughout the year depending on children's interests.

The outdoor play areas were accessible to children throughout the day so they could experience outdoor activities at any time. More information about the overall quality of toys and resources available throughout the nursery is given in Quality Statement 2.5.

Children were encouraged to take part in project work about caring for the environment. A group of children were currently working on redesigning the garden and we saw their plans displayed in the entrance foyer. Some of the children were eager to share their knowledge and ideas in this area.

Children also took part in activities which helped them to think about risks and manage them safely in their daily lives. For example road safety was a regular part of learning. Staff were aware that some 'risks' carried benefits in terms of

supporting children to stretch and challenge themselves in their play. Staff helped children by providing challenging experiences within a supportive environment. This encouraged the children to make their own decisions, for example when climbing and riding bikes.

The property manager was responsible for completing a full risk assessment of the premises at least once a year. This was done more often if changes were made to the environment or if 'hot spots' were identified. In addition staff completed daily checks to help ensure the children were cared for in a safe and secure environment.

Cleaning staff came into the nursery at least twice a day to ensure that the environment was well maintained. They hoovered, dusted and cleaned the kitchen and toilet areas. They ensured that toilets were well stocked with soap, paper and tissues so that children could follow good hygiene procedures. The team were also available in the event of unexpected spills or accidents needing to be cleaned up quickly. A considerable advantage of this was that staff were freed up to focus on the children's care and support needs.

Parents who returned our questionnaires told us they agreed and strongly agreed with the following statements:

- The service is a safe, secure, hygienic, smoke-free, pleasant and stimulating environment.
- The service has a suitable range of equipment, toys and materials for the children.
- There is enough space for the children to play and get involved in a range of activities.

### **Areas for improvement**

In order to maintain their excellent grades in relation to this Quality Statement the service should continue to look for innovative ways to enhance children's safety and protection.

**Grade**

6 - Excellent

**Number of requirements - 0**

**Number of recommendations - 0**

**Statement 5**

“The accommodation and resources are suitable for the needs of the service users. ”

**Service Strengths**

We found that the service provided excellent evidence of how they met the areas of practice we looked at in relation to this Quality Statement.

The nursery environment was of a very high standard. Quality fixtures and fittings specifically designed for use by pre-school children meant the children were cared for in an environment developed to meet their needs. Staff understood the importance of involving children and of giving them a choice of activities which were stimulating, and provided challenge both physically and intellectually.

Staff and children had worked together to look at the layout of the playroom and how it allowed children to make choices and move around freely. This layout was reviewed frequently to help ensure the environment continued to meet the children's needs, and provide interest and challenge in the activities available to them.

We found that the nursery was exceptionally well resourced. All of the toys and equipment within the playroom were laid out so that children could access them without adult support. The high quality and the quantity of resources helped to ensure that children's experiences were positive and fulfilling. For example, children interested in building were able to realise their creations because of the quantity and range of wooden blocks available to them. Children who were interested in art activities had a huge range of arts and crafts materials available to them which allowed them free reign with their imaginations. Interactive topic tables were changed regularly and this allowed children opportunities to experiment and explore topics.

Staff told us they had a generous budget and if they or the children identified something they felt they needed to support activities and interests this would be put in place. Storage within the nursery was well organised so that it was easy for staff to find resources and respond to children's immediate interests.

Children in the nursery had access to the resources of the whole school including the sports hall, science labs, art studio, library and music rooms. We were aware that staff from the primary and senior school worked with the nursery children from time to time. For example, an interest in volcanos had led to some experimental work with the science teacher. Children were able to experiment with a wide range of musical instruments and were able to hear them being played by children from the upper school. These additional resources added considerably to the already wide range of resources and experiences that existed in the nursery. A parent commented "From the moment you walk in it has a lovely feeling. The children are continuously learning things but in a fun and engaging manner." and "The quality and choice for children is amazing. I believe my child had the best possible start for their education."

Physical play was promoted because children had free access to the well equipped garden areas at all times. We saw that they moved confidently between the indoor and outdoor play spaces making use of climbing and balancing equipment, bikes, bats, balls and other equipment that encouraged them to use their bodies and challenge themselves.

All of the activities available in the playrooms could take place outside. The garden offered many spaces for quieter activities including reading, painting and drawing.

Children were active gardeners and had planted fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers, some of which were used in cooking and baking activities. Several children talked enthusiastically about plans they had in mind for the development of the garden.

Recent additions to the garden had included a mud kitchen. We saw children enjoyed making pies and potions from materials they had gathered in the garden. Children had reported on the mud kitchen in their newsletter. Their comments included "I love mud. It feels all soggy." and "I like making pizzas, lots of mud needed."

The school worked hard to develop and support positive relationships within the neighbourhood. This had recently led to them to successfully negotiate access to Merchiston Gardens which is a large locked garden with a wooded area owned by the residents. Children were able to enjoy a woodland and forest schools experience close to their school and within the city.

Parents who returned our questionnaires told us they strongly agreed with the following statements:

- My child can experience and choose from a balanced range of activities.
- My child gets regular access to fresh air and energetic physical play.
- Staff make good use of resources in the community.

Additional comments included "The environment continually impressed me. My child bounded through the door every day and continually talks about his time there," and "The overall quality of my child's experience has exceeded my expectations."

### Areas for improvement

In order to maintain their current excellent grade in relation to this Quality Statement the service should continue to look for innovative ways to involve families in making decisions about the use of resources within the nursery.

### Grade

6 - Excellent

**Number of requirements - 0**

**Number of recommendations - 0**

## Quality Theme 3: Quality of Staffing

Grade awarded for this theme: 6 - Excellent

### Statement 2

"We are confident that our staff have been recruited, and inducted, in a safe and robust manner to protect service users and staff."

### Service Strengths

The service provided excellent information of how they met the areas of practice we looked at in relation to this Quality Statement.

The service had its own Human Resources department responsible for ensuring that safer recruitment practices were carried out. They carried out regular reviews of policies and procedures including whistle blowing and safer recruitment in order to ensure they were compliant with current legislation.

We looked at the recruitment files for five members of staff and found the following:

- An audit trail was in place which helped to track the recruitment procedure, for example we could see when references had been requested and when they had been returned.
- All staff held the necessary qualifications for their post and were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) or the General Teaching Council (GTC). These are the bodies responsible for setting the qualifications required for specific roles in care and teaching. It is not possible to work in child care or education without being registered with one of these bodies.
- All staff had been asked to have a Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) check or an update.
- All staff had to provide the contact details for at least two individuals who

would provide a written reference. One of these individuals had to be the most recent employer.

- Staff were asked to give an account of any gaps in their employment record. If it was felt necessary they were asked to provide formal evidence of this.
- The service was active in ensuring that information in references was sufficiently detailed. We saw examples of occasions where they had reminded previous employers of their responsibility to provide sufficient information in references to support effective decision making.
- All new employees were initially appointed on a trial basis in order to ensure they were able to meet the expectations of their post.

The Head of School and members of the Junior School management team were involved in the recruitment interview. School Governors were involved in the recruitment of senior staff: School Governors may also be parents. Parents were given information about vacant posts and were kept up to date with the recruitment process.

As part of the interview process, potential candidates spent time working in the nursery. This gave staff an opportunity to observe their skills and interaction with the children and to gauge children's response to them.

We spoke to a recently recruited member of nursery staff who confirmed all of the above. They told us they had gone through a thorough induction process over a period of several days which they felt had helped prepare them for their role in the service. This had included what they should do in the event of any concerns over the wellbeing of children, their responsibility to report any concerns in the conduct of colleagues, expectations of their general conduct, interaction with families and of their willingness to take part in further training. As part of their induction they had been asked to give signed confirmation that they understood their responsibility in relation to the SSSC code of professional conduct. They were also asked to confirm in writing that they understood the services policies and procedures.

The Head Teacher told us the service had high expectations of staff. The school

employed staff who were committed to continuous professional development and who were prepared to take part in regular training courses in line with identified professional development needs and the needs of children attending the service.

The service employed its own bank staff of employees who could provide cover in the event of absence of any kind. The Head Teacher told us this worked well for the children because the bank staff were familiar with the expectations and standards of the service. Safer recruitment procedures as described above had been carried out on these individuals

Parents who returned our questionnaires told us they agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:

- I am confident that staff have the skills and experience to care for my child and to support their learning and development.
- I am confident that there are always enough staff in the service to provide a good quality of care.

### Areas for improvement

In order to maintain their current excellent grades the provider should continue to look for ways to build on their existing high quality recruitment procedures.

### Grade

6 - Excellent

**Number of requirements - 0**

**Number of recommendations - 0**

### Statement 3

"We have a professional, trained and motivated workforce which operates to National Care Standards, legislation and best practice."

### Service Strengths

We found the service provided excellent evidence of how they met the areas of practice we looked at in relation to this Quality Statement.

All staff working within the service were registered with the SSSC or GTC. Photographs of staff together with the positions they held and some of their training certificates were displayed within the nursery where they could be seen by parents and visitors. This helped promote confidence in staff's ability and commitment to the children in their care.

From our observations of their practice and from our discussions with staff we found they were well trained, motivated and enthusiastic in their work with the children and in relation to their professional development. Parents told us "Staff are enthusiastic and proactive." and "Staff are very professional, they understand my child very well. They are well led by the Head of Nursery."

We spoke to several members of the nursery team. They confirmed that they met with the nursery head for a six monthly update of their work and an annual review. The annual review looked at individual learning needs for the coming year. The review was broken down into three areas and staff were asked to consider what they wanted to achieve, what they needed to do to achieve their aim and how would this benefit themselves, the department and the school.

Staff were responsible for keeping their own record of training and a copy was kept in the service's records.

An annual training calendar was in place. This ensured that all staff took part in training in child protection, first aid and food hygiene. These courses were refreshed at least once every three years.

The nursery had copies of the key documents which influenced and supported staff practice. They included Building the Ambition, National Care Standards and Child at the Centre 2 which was used in ongoing monitoring and self evaluation. Staff had access to the service's extensive library of relevant books on early childcare and education and to research documents. Staff were encouraged to use technology available in the service to support any research they might want to do in relation to their professional development.

The nursery head told us she had high expectations of her team and in return they were supported by the school to ensure that they were given access

to training to support their professional development. This was confirmed by staff who told us the nursery head was always available for consultation and guidance. Since the last inspection took place staff had been given a wide range of training opportunities including Building the Ambition, GIRFEC and the SHANARRI principles, The Reflective Practitioner, Circle Time, Forest Schools, Outdoor Learning, Story Telling, Dance and Movement and Science Across the Seasons. In addition to this staff had taken part in in-service training days within the wider school and attended relevant seminars provided by, for example, City of Edinburgh Council Department of Early Education and by the Scottish Council of Independent Schools.

The stability of the staff team was a significant strength. Staff communicated well together, they knew one another's strengths and used them to help ensure that the children experienced a high level of professional support within the nursery.

As previously stated in Quality Statement 3.2, the school employed their own bank staff. This ensured that children were cared for by staff who were familiar with them and with the service. Bank staff took part in some training courses and were up to date with child protection training and procedures.

Parents who returned our questionnaires told us they agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement:

- I am confident that staff have the skills and experience to care for my child and to support their learning and development.

### Areas for improvement

In order to maintain their current excellent grades the service should continue to look for ways to build on the existing high quality recruitment procedures.

### Grade

6 - Excellent

**Number of requirements - 0**

**Number of recommendations - 0**

## Quality Theme 4: Quality of Management and Leadership

Grade awarded for this theme: 6 - Excellent

### Statement 2

“We involve our workforce in determining the direction and future objectives of the service.”

### Service Strengths

We found that the service provided excellent evidence of how they met the areas of practice we looked at in relation to this Quality Statement.

Information in Quality Statement 3.2 and 3.3 also apply to this Quality Statement.

During the inspection we spoke with staff, both individually and as a small group. We found they were enthusiastic about their work and about the opportunities they were given to influence the direction of the service. For example, they had been involved in the putting together the whole school strategic plan. They were confident in talking about the targets in the document and the progress being made toward meeting them.

Staff told us they had regular contact with the nursery head teacher. They felt she knew them well because she spent regular time in the service and that she valued the skills and experience they brought to their roles in the service. She regularly attended staff meetings and expected staff to come to these meetings prepared to discuss and evaluate practice and outcomes for children. These meetings were recorded.

Staff had been involved in the 360 degree review of the Head of Nursery's performance which showed trust and confidence in their ability to take on this role.

As previously stated we saw that staff had been given responsibilities for working with children on specific areas of the nursery, for example the development of the garden. Other staff had been given responsibility for working with families to develop a cook book of favourite family recipes. The book had been illustrated with photographs of the children making the recipes.

We saw examples of the work staff were currently involved in. This took a more indepth view of the service and looked at the opportunities available to children and how they could be further improved. The work had been broken down into causes, effects and solutions. We felt this evidenced a trusted professional group of practitioners who were continually seeking to improve the outcomes for children, and who had the confidence to reflect on and critically evaluate their practice.

In addition to opportunities to lead on specific pieces of work, staff were able to take part in training focussing on leadership and were aware of the SSS Step Into Leadership Programme.

### Areas for improvement

In order to maintain their current excellent grade in relation to this Quality Statement the service should continue to look for innovative ways to support staff in determining the future objectives of the service.

### Grade

6 - Excellent

**Number of requirements - 0**

**Number of recommendations - 0**

### Statement 4

"We use quality assurance systems and processes which involve service users, carers, staff and stakeholders to assess the quality of service we provide."

## Service Strengths

We found that the service provided excellent evidence of how they met the areas of practice we looked at in relation to this Quality Statement.

Information in Quality Statement 1.1 relating to participation and consultation also applies to this Quality Statement.

An annual plan and statement of aims and objectives were in place and shared with families and other stakeholders via distribution and display within the service.

Staff told us they used Child at the Centre 2 as a practical audit tool which supported them to achieve high quality practice in their day work with children.

As a partner provider nursery, the service received support, guidance and external quality assurance from Quality Improvement Officers employed by the City of Edinburgh Council.

The service's complaints procedure gave families clear information about how they could take forward any issues or concerns about the service. This included information about the Care Inspectorate's role and their right to contact us any time.

When we spoke to the nursery head teacher we were confident that she understood her responsibility to inform the Care Inspectorate of any significant events involving children. She also understood her responsibility to report significant staffing concerns to the SSSC and staff had been given information about the SSSC Codes of Conduct.

The head teacher and the nursery head had a clear vision for the continuous development of the nursery. Self evaluation was thorough and ongoing. They met frequently in order to evaluate the progress of the plans they developed with input from staff, as described in Quality Statement 4.2.

The service employed its own support staff. During the inspection we spoke to some of the staff who were involved in children's medical care and support

needs. They told us they had close links with the nursery and they were consulted for their views as part of the ongoing evaluation of the service.

We found that the Head of Nursery understood how the success of the service in terms of its ability to provide positive outcomes for children depended on the ability of its staff to continually evaluate and respond to input from families and other stakeholders. She ensured that staff were supported to be reflective practitioners aware of, and trained in, current best practice. We felt she had created an open and forward looking service in order to achieve this.

### Areas for improvement

In order to maintain their current excellent grade in relation to this Quality Statement the service should continue to look for innovative ways for staff and other stakeholders to determine the future objectives of the service.

### Grade

6 - Excellent

Number of requirements - 0

Number of recommendations - 0

## 4 What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at our last inspection

### Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

## 5 What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at our last inspection

### Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

## 6 Complaints

No complaints have been upheld, or partially upheld, since the last inspection.

## 7 Enforcements

We have taken no enforcement action against this care service since the last inspection.

## 8 Additional Information

## 9 Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings								
10 Oct 2012	Unannounced	<table> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>6 - Excellent</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment</td> <td>6 - Excellent</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staffing</td> <td>6 - Excellent</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management and Leadership</td> <td>6 - Excellent</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	6 - Excellent	Environment	6 - Excellent	Staffing	6 - Excellent	Management and Leadership	6 - Excellent
Care and support	6 - Excellent									
Environment	6 - Excellent									
Staffing	6 - Excellent									
Management and Leadership	6 - Excellent									
11 Jun 2009	Unannounced	<table> <tr> <td>Care and support</td> <td>5 - Very Good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment</td> <td>5 - Very Good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staffing</td> <td>5 - Very Good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management and Leadership</td> <td>5 - Very Good</td> </tr> </table>	Care and support	5 - Very Good	Environment	5 - Very Good	Staffing	5 - Very Good	Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good
Care and support	5 - Very Good									
Environment	5 - Very Good									
Staffing	5 - Very Good									
Management and Leadership	5 - Very Good									

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