

St. George's School for Girls Day Care of Children

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Edinburgh
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Telephone: 01313 118 000

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 September 2022

Service provided by:
St. George's School for Girls

Service provider number:
SP2003003567

Service no:
CS2003016180

About the service

St. George's School for Girls, referred to as the nursery in this report, is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 56 children aged between 2 years 6 months and primary school entry at any one time. Of those 56 children no more than 10 will be under the age of 3 years.

The nursery provides full day care for children including breakfast, nursery and nursery plus which offers after nursery care.

The school is situated in a residential area of central Edinburgh. The nursery provision is set within the Junior School and provides a number of playrooms and an outdoor area. The nursery have use of the wider school grounds, nearby woods and walks.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place over two days on 07 September 2022 between 9:45am and 4:00pm and 15 September 2022 between 1:00pm and 6:00pm. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. Feedback was given to the Head Teacher of the Junior School and Nursery provision on 20 September 2022.

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 staff and those responsible for the management of the nursery
- observed staff practice and experiences for children
- reviewed documents
- spoke to children
- sought feedback from those using the service.

Key messages

- Children were happy, having fun and confident in their surroundings
- Children had opportunities to influence their play and learning
- The nursery environment provided children with a high quality environment which was warm and welcoming
- Staff worked well as a team to promote positive outcomes for the children in their care
- Personal plans could be improved to make the support strategies for children clearer
- Consideration should be given to the lunch routine for the youngest children
- Self-evaluation processes could be further developed to include aspects that influence all outcomes for children

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?	5 - Very 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 confident and relaxed in the care of staff who understood the importance of nurture and relationships. At the time of our visit there were a number of children settling into life at nursery. The key worker system had been used effectively to build relationships with families to support the settling in process and share information to meet children's needs. Staff had built in a clear structure and rhythm to the day to help children mark time in a predictable and reassuring way. Staff needed to ensure that this structure was balanced and did not limit children's play and or their choice of where to play.

A range of information had been gathered about children which made up the personal plan. Staff talked in depth about the children in their care and knew them well but some of the information was not fully recorded. Some of the support strategies for individual children needed to be more defined to enable a consistent approach from staff that could be assessed and adapted as necessary.

Although children were accommodated in two age groups, they spent considerable periods as one group when playing outdoors, going to lunch or using the nursery plus part of the service. Older children were very kind and caring towards the younger or new children in the nursery. Many had formed friendships with each other, and staff supported the development of social interactions well. Staff promoted an ethos of respect in the way that they responded to each other and to children's needs.

Children enjoyed high quality meals and snacks. Staff were in the process of re-introducing the rolling snack system to further support independence and choice. Staff were aware of the value of mealtimes for children. There was discussion to help children become familiar with the routine, they provided opportunities for choice, sat with children and joined them for their meal. Lunch was provided in the school dining hall. We asked that the use of the dining hall for the youngest children is considered as the process of getting to the hall and having lunch was long and did not fully meet some children's needs.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children were having fun with each other and engaged staff appropriately in their play. Staff had a very good understanding of child development and used this in their assessments of children's learning and progress. Parents said that they were given a very good overview of their child's learning through the online journals and through the planning in the moment recordings, which focussed on the individual child.

Staff regularly discussed children's learning and progress to ensure that there was a shared understanding of the value of learning through play. Floor books were used to clearly identify the child's voice in how play and learning developed. They also identified learning outcomes and any potential next steps for learning progression.

Children had opportunities to play outdoors for significant periods of the day. The outdoor area provided a varied and interesting learning environment. Children had regular access to other areas of the school grounds for outdoor play and forest school experiences with trained members of staff to support this learning. Staff had identified that some further work could be carried out to ensure that children were fully engaged in their play when outdoors. This would further enhance the learning opportunities. Indoors the learning environments were very well organised and thoughtfully arranged to provide an interesting and exciting place to play. We asked that staff continue to develop the choice to play indoors or outdoors as part of the daily routine.

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 high quality facilities

The nursery was an integral part of the Junior School. The facilities were over two floors. Children were accommodated in two age groups, 2 ½ years - 3 years and 3 - 5 years. The nursery premises provided two large main playrooms and additional spaces for small group work and activities.

The nursery had an environment which welcomed and valued parents, professionals, and visitors. Displays in hallways gave information about the staff, the vision and values of the nursery and a range of information about what was going on in nursery. Clear signage enabled people to find their way about easily, making them feel more familiar with the environment.

The play and learning environments for children were arranged to take account of developmental stages. The two main playrooms were attractively laid out for children's play and provided a range of good quality learning resources. Children could independently access additional resources for their play. Displays to capture children's interests were used to good effect and there were wall displays of children's art and craft work, which helps make children feel that what they do is valued.

We visited the nursery plus part of the service which took place after the main nursery day finished. Staff had ensured that this provided children with an alternative experience from the nursery day. It took place in a different playroom within the nursery as staff understood that by this time-of-day children may need a change of environment and slower pace to the session. Children were very relaxed in this environment and told us that they liked this time of day.

Throughout the nursery there were clear procedures to ensure that the environments indoors and outdoors were safe, and that resources and furniture were clean. Toilets and nappy changing facilities were clean and well maintained throughout the day. Infection prevention and control measures were in place and consistently followed to provide a safe environment for children, parents, and visitors.

Information about children and their families was kept securely and stored in line with the General Data Protection Regulations. Staff had a very good understanding of confidentiality, which was part of the induction procedures and was revisited regularly at staff meetings.

How good is our leadership?

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 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

The management and leadership structure was clearly communicated to parents and understood by staff. The Head of the Junior School and Nursery devolved daily responsibility for the nursery to a nursery teacher in Big Owls and a room leader in Little Owls. They were clear about their leadership responsibilities and were said by staff to provide very good support and leadership in the nursery.

There was an ethos of improvement through reflective discussion. This took place in whole team and the smaller room team meetings. Managers had ensured that these meetings were given priority as they were seen as a valuable opportunity to share and develop practice. To enable staff to carry out their keyworker duties there was protected child free time each week. This had helped to ensure that recordings and communications with parents or other professionals were up to date to ensure an accurate overview of each child.

Systems were in place for the self-evaluation of the nursery. There were very good systems to evaluate learning opportunities which resulted in improvement plans. There was also evidence of discussions about areas of the service where improvements could be made. We talked to the nursery teacher and room leader about the need to widen the self-evaluation and auditing processes to include, in more depth, other areas of practice that influence outcomes for children.

Parents we spoke to identified that communication within the nursery was a key strength. They felt that information sharing at the end of the day provided a very good snapshot of their child's day. The recent welcoming of parents back into the nursery had increased the opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the nursery.

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.

Key indicator 4.3: Staff deployment.

Staffing arrangements promoted continuity of care across the day. The consistent staff group communicated very well with each other and worked as a team over periods of transition during the day. For example, lunch time and home time. Breaks were well planned to ensure that those working the longest hours had opportunities for rest through the day. Where additional staff were needed these were taken from a small pool of school staff who were known to children and who were familiar with nursery practices.

The staff group provided a rich mix of skills and experience which had been well used to enhance positive outcomes for children. Training and learning opportunities had been achieved by on-line courses, in service training and the reading and implementation of good practice documents. Staff were looking forwards to taking part in more face-to-face training to enable them to have more reflective discussions about practice with their peers.

Newer staff to the team had received an in-depth induction. This was a whole school approach which included specific induction areas for nursery. Staff said that it had been a valuable experience as it clearly

highlighted the expectations the organisation had of staff but also what staff could expect from the organisation. The induction procedure identified mentoring support for new staff and included a regular review process to ensure that staff felt supported and were performing well.

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	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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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