

The Glasgow Academy Nursery and Kindergarten, Kelvinbridge Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
Glasgow Academics War Memorial
Trust

Service provider number:
SP2003003598

Service no:
CS2008187699

About the service

The Glasgow Academy Nursery and Kindergarten, Kelvinbridge is one of several services operated by Glasgow Academicals War Memorial Trust in partnership with Glasgow City Council. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 84 children from age 3 years to those not yet attending primary school at any one time. The nursery and kindergarten offer full and part day, early learning and childcare either term time or throughout the year. Designated nursery and kindergarten playrooms for children in each of the age groups were available. During operating times, the service also used a prep school hall when not in use by other children. A large secure enclosed outdoor area offered children daily opportunities for outdoor play and learning. The service is close to transport routes and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 8 March 2023. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with some of the children using the service and reviewed survey responses from 16 parents whose children attend the service.
- Spoke with the service provider, manager and staff. We also reviewed survey responses from seven staff.
- Observed practice and staff interactions with children.
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

Children benefited from a skilled staff team who worked very well together and had created a welcoming, inclusive environment.

Children were spoken and listened to in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included.

Staff had high aspirations to enable children to be successful.

Staff promoted a culture within the service that focussed on promoting the children's right to play, have fun and experience challenge.

Children were provided with a rich variety of high quality learning experiences.

Staff participated in a sector leading international partnership working with potential to support wellbeing and promote positive outcomes for children in both Scotland and India.

Play spaces offered excitement, were richly resourced and appeared attractive to children.

Children had regular daily access to high quality outdoor play as well as opportunities to experience a well considered programme of forest kindergarten activities.

There was a shared vision for the setting that reflected the aspirations of children, families, partners and the wider community.

Very strong leadership of the service supported staff to have high aspirations and confidence in their capacity to support children and families to reach their full potential.

Adaptations to staffing arrangements and practices during children's lunchtime routines were identified and advised.

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?	6 - Excellent
How good is our setting?	6 - Excellent
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?

6 - Excellent

We made an evaluation of excellent for this key question as we found innovative, effective practice and very high-quality performance across a range of the nursery's activities from which other services could learn. We were confident that this level of performance was sustainable and that it will be maintained.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

We looked at how the service's planning approaches for children's care, learning and development ensured they experienced positive outcomes. Children benefited from a highly skilled staff team who worked very well together and had created a welcoming, inclusive environment. Their sound knowledge of child development, GIRFEC (Getting It Right for Every Child) and the well-being indicators resulted in children's individual needs being met. We observed staff being responsive to children's changeable interests and demands. Children were spoken and listened to in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included. Conversations between staff and children about their individual learning interests and support needs were used consistently and effectively to ensure personal outcomes of outstanding quality.

Staff worked closely with families, involving them in decisions about their child's care and development. This enabled the relevant staff to respond quickly, sensitively and compassionately to changes in a child's life. Staff were highly skilled in using the information in children's personal plans to meet their needs. Personal plans and learning story journals using the SHANARRI (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included) wellbeing indicators and the Early Level of Curriculum for Excellence were regularly reviewed and included targets for achievement and next steps. Staff told us how they used observations to help track children's progress and shared this information at regular planning meetings. The observations formed parts of each child's learning story which was used for parental feedback as well as personalised termly reports. A parent commented: "The staff have supported our daughter with all aspects of her learning and more recently in an emotional and pastoral sense. We couldn't be any happier with how the staff look after our child. The staff really take the time to get to know your child which is wonderful." Another parent told us: "The staff are great, the children are members of a safe and respectful community, and the whole experience is very positive for all, including our children and their family. The staff all have an extra 'kindness gene' and I wholeheartedly recommend them to you." A third parent stated: "I cannot speak highly enough of all areas of care at The Glasgow Academy, compassionate, motivating, engaging and professional."

Staff were clear about their responsibilities in respect of safeguarding children. They had completed refresher training in child protection and were confident about recognising and reporting any concerns they had.

1.3 Play and learning

Staff had high aspirations to enable children to be successful. Children's voice was valued, and they were empowered to lead their own play and learning. As a result, children were confident, happy and motivated to learn. Highly effective use of questioning provided an abundance of opportunities for encouraging children's thinking, widening their skills and consolidated their learning through play experiences. A range of strategies and regular opportunities through structured activities and programmes supported children to flourish and achieve. For example, children's emotional literacy had been supported through 'Five special things about me' and 'The Colour Monster' activities. 'Owl Babies' books and games had provided children

with opportunities to explore their emotions and feelings and supported positive behaviour strategies for parents at home. Parents were invited to celebrate their children's successes in learning story 'star achievement sheet' and by sending photos, certificates and awards to share at news time. All children and families were encouraged to take part in a lending library and take-home bags initiative. These approaches significantly contributed to the inclusive ethos of the service. One parent commented: "The nursery is fantastic at providing advice, resources to borrow to continue learning at home. The monthly song and story session we are invited to is great."

We found that staff promoted a culture within the service that focussed on promoting the children's right to play, have fun and experience challenge. Staff told us they worked hard to provide a rich variety of high quality learning experiences by continuously promoting choice, children's interests, as well as tracking and reflecting on individual achievements. A parent told us: "I feel Glasgow Academy are excellent at providing my child with opportunity to learn without realising. I enjoy how much they involve him in the local community and learn through this. Opportunity through outdoor learning both on site and through outdoor adventure is something both my husband and I feel is very important to our son's development." Another parent commented: "I love that the children go on a variety trips and excursions, and they make the most of the local area. I believe that the input from subject experts in physical education and music is very beneficial for the children." A third parent stated: "I have been impressed by the varied activities that they do. I love: the cooking/baking that they do; the lending library; that they go out and about in the neighbourhood, including teaching road safety; the days they have gone to the fruit shop and got to try lots of exotic fruits. I enjoy looking at my child's folder to see what they have been up to." Through discussion with staff, it was evident they shared a clear understanding of the resulting impact of their observations, evaluations and planning for play on the breadth and depth of children's learning.

At the time of the inspection, staff were working in an international partnership with Nehru World School to develop an innovative research based early years curricular programme in Noida, India. Noida is a satellite city of Delhi and is a part of the National Capital Region (NCR) of India. The aim is to marry high quality early years education alongside extended care for up to 250 Indian children. The forest kindergarten coordinator had been targeted to play a key role in development of the outdoor play curriculum which was being adapted from the highly successful forest kindergarten programme he had introduced across the provider's Glasgow services. Nursery staff had also shared their approaches to early writing, purposeful drawing and storytelling in seminars with international colleagues. This work had the potential to support wellbeing and promote positive outcomes for children across international boundaries. This initiative represented sector leading practice from which other early learning and childcare services could learn.

How good is our setting?

6 - Excellent

We made an evaluation of excellent for this key question as we identified outstanding levels of provision across a range of the nursery and kindergarten's indoor and outdoor play, care and learning spaces for children.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The service made excellent use of available resources to create a motivating environment for children to play together. All play environments offered excitement, were richly resourced and appeared attractive to children. Play spaces included a range of open-ended and natural resources to stimulate children's creativity and problem solving. We found children used these to extend and develop their play in line with their self-chosen plans. For example, loose parts and Montessori inspired resources had encouraged the children to develop their fine motor skills, inspired curiosity in unfamiliar objects and developed their vocabulary.

Staff ensured spaces were set up in ways that were adaptable and had potential to encourage children's sustained thinking. We found these resources were used by staff to support creative approaches that successfully engaged children's imagination and enriched their play and learning. For example, children had been introduced to digital technology resources which had supported the development of early coding and programming skills. This had led to the children contributing to a Science, Engineering, Maths and Science (STEM) Leaders 'Sharing the Journey' Conference for young STEM ambassadors. This provided a showcase for celebrating children's achievements as well as promoted children's self-confidence and feelings of self-esteem.

We found that staff shared their reflections on how setting up and monitoring of each play area can lead to challenging and engaging play opportunities for children. For example, we found staff had introduced and developed an indoor STEM area for children. Staff told us how this had extended children's interest in experiments, encouraged greater dialogue as well as widen children's use of vocabulary including specific scientific terms. We found garden play areas has been rearranged to provide more space, widen play opportunities and support children's transition experiences between the nursery and kindergarten. A large water table and sand pit with fixed equipment had been set up in the lower garden area to extend opportunities for children's exploratory and discovery play. In addition, we found some play spaces had been adapted to introduce sensory experiences. This included light table activities, nurture resources and an audio player to promote the development of listening skills.

We found that children had regular daily access to outdoor play as well as opportunities to experience a well considered programme of forest kindergarten activities. Staff told us how a planned 'language development walk' in the local community had provoked children's curiosity in empty wasps' nests and promoted an awareness of life cycles in nature. Staff told us how first hand experience of rainfall had fascinated children as they observed raindrops bounce off grass and fill up empty containers in the garden. This has provided a platform for further play based learning experiences and science and early maths discussions about quantity and volume.

Children's safety was promoted through detailed risk assessments for all environments and activities accessed by them. These were regularly reviewed and staff were aware of their responsibility to identify and remove any new hazards in the way of children's safety and wellbeing. A parent commented: "I would like to say that we could not have hoped for a more nurturing and enriching environment for our little girl to attend. We are delighted in every way by the staff, the resources and activities offered to our daughter. They far surpass our expectations." Another parent told us: "The environment is brilliant."

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require significant adjustment.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The manager promoted a shared vision for the setting that reflected the aspirations of children, families, partners and the wider community. The senior management team had created conditions where all staff and parents felt confident to initiate well-informed change and share responsibility for the process. Positive working relationships between the manager, team and staff promoted a collegiate approach to providing high quality play experiences for children.

Staff told us how the manager provided a clear focus for their shared team work including setting out clear responsibilities and expectations. We found that the manager's leadership approach had helped build, maintain and strengthen the capacity of the team to deliver continuity in children's care. It had contributed to children's emotional health and wellbeing being a focus including during transitions into and within the setting. This ensured the care children experienced was delivered by familiar key adults who were perceived as consistent, reliable, trustworthy, and responsive to their needs. One parent commented: "Communication is excellent with all staff and our family. I feel staff always make time to speak to you even at busy drop off and pick up times. They always know what has been going on with my child that day. They able to recognise my child's needs and provide him with appropriate care."

We found that very strong leadership of the service supported staff to have high aspirations and confidence in their capacity to support children and families to reach their full potential. The staff team worked together very effectively to evaluate and reflect on their practice. They were keen to take forward current ideas, develop and implement best practice guidance. Staff were becoming familiar with the Care Inspectorate 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare' (Care Inspectorate, 2022). The manager highlighted how previous inspection feedback had been used to support the development of an improvement plan that clearly set out the service priorities and targets for change. The management team told us how they dedicated time to analysing children's, staff and parents' contributions to any consultations and extracting the key messages or themes. We found that these self-evaluation processes enabled the service to deliver high quality care and support tailored towards children and families particular needs and choices. A parent commented: "If I have any concerns or questions the manager responds very promptly and doesn't hesitate to offer face to face meetings if I require further discussion."

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We made an evaluation of very good for this key question as we found performance that demonstrated major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for children and did not require significant adjustment.

4.3 Staff Deployment

Effective staff deployment across the service meant that children's individual needs were being met by the right number of staff throughout almost all elements of the day. The staff to child ratio allowed staff to be responsive to individual needs which enhanced children's experiences and ensured children had the right support at the right time. Children who required additional support were well supported by staff to feel respected and included in daily experiences. This was enhanced through effective working relationships with families. One parent commented: "They are professional staff, who are extremely well organised. There is good communication with parents including providing personalised learning journals for each child. There is good inclusion of the parents and grandparents via stay play and learn sessions and other opportunities."

A robust induction process supported newly appointed staff to meet children's needs. The induction programme helped new staff to settle into their role and become part of the staff team. As a result, they were clear about their roles and responsibilities which supported children's experiences.

The staff routinely engaged in a range of professional learning activities that built on and sustained their practice. We found staff were confident in discussing how they had improved their practice as a result of their own professional learning activities. Staff told us how their professional learning was linked to a wide variety of leadership roles within the team including: digital learning; outdoor play; early literacy and

numeracy; supporting transitions; children's rights. We found that this learning had a positive impact on the quality of experiences for children, their progress and wider improvements in the setting.

We identified a number of adaptations to staffing arrangements and practices during lunchtime routines which would ensure minimum adult to child ratios were met at all times and best practice infection prevention control measures were consistently followed (see Area for improvement 1). These can help realise the nursery and kindergarten's commitment to providing a safe, more relaxed and nurturing environment for children during lunchtimes. This will increase opportunities for staff to be responsive to individual needs and support children to develop positive attachments with key adults. We signposted the manager to our practice note 'Keeping children safe: supporting positive mealtime experiences in early learning and childcare (ELC)' to support professional reflection on mealtime improvements within the staff team.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that children receive care that is right for them, the manager should monitor and review and lunchtime arrangements to ensure that staff are deployed in a way that meets children's needs. This should ensure: minimum adult to child ratios are met at all times; there are rich opportunities for children to connect and engage in conversation with other children and staff during lunch; staff have the knowledge and awareness of safe food hygiene practice and best practice infection prevention and control measures.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards, which state: "I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as a relaxed atmosphere as possible" (HSCS 1.35); "My needs are met by the right number of people" (HSCS 3.15); "People have time to support and care for me and to speak with me" (HSCS 3.16); "My care and support meets my needs and is right for me" (HSCS 1.19).

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?	6 - Excellent
1.1 Nurturing care and support	6 - Excellent
1.3 Play and learning	6 - Excellent

How good is our setting?	6 - Excellent
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	6 - Excellent

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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