

The Old School House Family First Nurseries Limited

Day Care of Children

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Kirknewton
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Telephone: 01312022555

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
25 July 2025

Service provided by:
Family First Nurseries Limited

Service provider number:
SP2022000087

Service no:
CS2022000188

About the service

The Old School House Family First Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 20 children at any one time up to the age of three years old.

The manager is also the manager at Dalmahoy Woodland Family First Nurseries Limited.

The nursery is situated in Kirknewton, Edinburgh, in a renovated building with a large outdoor garden and ample parking outside the front of the building.

Children have access to three play spaces that are set up for their age group, access to the large garden area, and a separate space set up for children to sleep.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday, 23 July 2025 between 09:15 and 15:30 hours and Thursday, 24 July between 08:30 and 12:30 hours. One inspector carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection, we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service and three of their families
- received 26 completed questionnaires
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection, we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning.

This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, caring and nurturing support from staff who knew them well.
- Children's choices were supported through a balance of planned and spontaneous play experiences and resources.
- Children benefitted from regular access to the outdoors. This supported their overall wellbeing.
- Effective leadership and quality assurance processes supported the ongoing development of the service.
- Children benefitted from a committed team who were passionate about providing high quality care and support.
- Effective deployment of staff ensured children were safe and their needs met.

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?	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 experienced warm and nurturing care from staff who were responsive in their approach. Close relationships between children and staff had been developed which helped children feel included and safe. Parents all agreed with the statement, 'Overall, I am happy with the care and support my child receives in this setting'. Comments we received included: "The staff are exceptionally caring and really go above and beyond for my child;" and "We are absolutely delighted with our experience, the staff do an excellent job, and we could not be happier that our child attends this nursery."

Children's emotional security and wellbeing was well supported. Staff were sensitive to children's individual needs and used stories, songs and rhymes to help settle and soothe them. Children's feelings were validated through the use of a feelings wall and the use of the colour monster resources. This contributed to them feeling safe and secure within their environment.

Personal plans held information to support and promote children's wellbeing, health, and safety. Staff were knowledgeable about each child's needs and strategies in place to support them. For example, health needs, dietary requirements, routines, interests and any required additional support. Object signifiers were used to support children to express themselves and singalong was used to help make communication more accessible and engaging. The plans were reviewed with parents regularly which meant the information remained current and supported a continuity of care.

Medication processes ensured children's overall health and wellbeing was supported. Clear medication consent forms and medical care plans was in place to support safe and effective practice. These were audited regularly to ensure they were accurate and reflective of children's current needs.

Children had a separate upstairs sleep room and children were settled with comforters from home. Consistent background noise played which helped prevent disturbance and promoted better sleep. Sleeping patterns met with children's individual needs and parents commented positively about individualised sleep patterns. Children's sleep was monitored at intervals in line with best practice guidance.

Staff sat with children at mealtimes and supported social interactions. This meant they could provide children with help or assistance when needed. They were knowledgeable of how to keep children safe and ensured any dietary needs were met. Opportunities to develop life skills and independence were promoted. For example, children were supported to self-serve, pour their own water and clear away their own dishes. While sufficient table space was available, a number of children chose to sit together at one table on the second day of inspection. This reduced opportunities for some children to self-serve due to the limited space for serving bowls and spoons. We discussed with staff reviewing mealtime arrangements to ensure children's choices do not limit their opportunities, and that mealtimes remain a consistently positive experience for all children.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Children were happy, confident, and had fun. They were developing skills and negotiating with each other. They benefitted from a range of play experiences and activities that supported their development and interests. This enabled them to lead their own play. These included building bricks, puzzles, dinosaurs and transport toys. Parents shared: "The activities are so varied;" and "So many brilliant activities, I can see this reflected in how my child is flourishing here."

The service, since the previous inspection, had added a range of natural resources and materials. They should continue to develop these, for example, in the home corner, to enhance further opportunities of challenge, creativity and curiosity.

Planning approaches were a balance of intentional and responsive experiences which provided children with opportunities to lead their own play and learning. They were child led and responsive to children's interests which supported children to feel involved. These interests were captured and progress tracked through observations photographs and displayed artwork. Children showed pride in their achievements and enjoyed chatting and recalling events. For example, they shared with us their interest in finding bugs and spiders. These interactions helped build and develop children's self-esteem.

Online observations were recorded for children within their learning journey. These demonstrated learning experiences which captured achievements and progress. Parents actively contributed by sharing experiences from home which influenced and informed future planning. This demonstrated value and respect for families in achieving a shared outcome.

Children were supported to develop their language and numeracy skills through play opportunities, storytelling, conversations with staff and routines of the day. Staff should continue to develop and reflect numeracy and literacy in all areas; for example, environmental print. This would enhance children's further learning.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported through regular access to the outdoors. Children were happy playing outside, having fun, sharing and developing skills. They were actively leading their own play and learning, engaged with resources which supported their interests; for example, the mud kitchen, water wall and mirror painting.

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.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

Children and families benefitted from a warm and welcoming environment. There was plenty of natural light and ventilation to support children's wellbeing. Spaces were bright, clean and well cared for. Parents told us: "It is like a home away from home;" and "Both the indoor and outdoor areas are fantastic."

Children's safety was maintained by a secure entry system during drop off and collection times. Boundary

fencing and gates were in place to keep children safe. Regular headcounts were undertaken, and walkie talkies provided effective communication. The entrance area was a welcoming space to meet parents and there was a range of photographs and information available. This helped families feel included in the life of the nursery.

Children spent much of the day outdoors in the large well equipped enclosed garden. Outdoor clothing was readily accessible and supported children to play in all weathers. A large polytunnel based in the garden was being redeveloped into an additional play space. This would provide children with the choice of a sheltered play space during the winter months.

Children had access to a range of resources that were well-organised and encouraged exploration and fun. There was ample space for children to extend their learning and interests with their chosen activities. Books were spread throughout the play spaces and children were seen exploring these spaces with confidence. The layout of the playrooms ensured that all children could freely move around and had access to, art and crafts, music, dressing up, and in the baby room, climbing equipment and soft play.

Whilst a variety of resources were available for children across the week, we found that some core provision, including sand, water and sensory play were not always available for children indoors. We discussed with staff how this had the potential for missed opportunities for children to continue to develop their creativity and imagination skills. A large sand pit and water were available outdoors at all times, ensuring children had continuous access to these experiences outdoors. We would encourage the management and staff team to continue exploring and enhancing provocations indoors to maintain consistently high-quality play and learning.

Children's health and wellbeing was promoted as effective infection prevention and control measures were in place. Handwashing took place regularly, including when coming in from outdoors and before mealtimes. An outdoor sink had been installed since the previous inspection which meant children had easy access to independently wash their hands while outdoors. Nappy changing areas were clean, with protective personal equipment (PPE) being stored appropriately.

Risk assessments were in place for indoor and outdoor environments which raised staff awareness of potential risks, benefits, and measures to support a safe environment. These were reviewed as changes occurred. This ensured they were current and adapted as needed.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

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

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

The management team promoted a welcoming and supportive ethos, and recognised the importance of a shared vision, values and aims. Parents told us: "The administrative portion of the nursery is excellent with prompt communication, clear aims, objectives and forward planning and they always keep parents well informed."

Staff expressed that they felt well supported by the management team and appreciated their regular presence within the playroom. Parents shared: "The team and management are great;" and "They exceed

my expectations." Staff told us they felt empowered to take on champion roles within the service; for example, outdoor play, forest school training, and language and literacy. This gave staff autonomy to make improvements and, as a result, they felt valued and that their opinions mattered.

Quality assurance processes were in place to ensure aspects of the service were routinely monitored. An annual quality assurance calendar helped the management team keep on track of auditing and monitoring tasks; for example, medication, accidents and incidents. Regular monitoring of staff practice ensured children received high quality play and learning experiences.

A culture of continuous improvement and self-evaluation was evident and was central to the ongoing development of the service. Views of staff, families and children were incorporated into all improvements made. As a result, children and families received care and support that met their needs. The service improvement plan had priorities that were outcome focussed with realistic targets. These included outdoor play, observations and language and literacy. Staff told us they were meaningfully involved in the self-evaluation process and improvement planning of the service. As a result, improvements were made at a steady pace.

Regular team meetings meant that the staff team worked very closely together which had a positive effect on outcomes for children. The meetings enabled staff to receive updates on the service, discuss the needs of individual children and share good practice. Staff were confident voicing their ideas and highlighting areas for development across the service. This contributed to staff feeling valued and listened to.

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.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment.

Children benefitted from a nurturing, caring and dedicated staff team who were warm and responsive in their approach. Staff worked well as a team and were motivated and committed to ensure continuity in children's care. They were respectful in their interactions with each other, which created a positive ethos. Staff were all very positive about their team relationships and one staff member told us, "Everyone is very supportive, and I love working here."

All parents agreed with the statement 'I have a good relationship with the staff caring for my child' and parent comments we received included: "Lovely staff, so caring towards the children;" and "The staff are amazing, so nurturing and genuinely passionate about what they do."

Staff were effectively deployed across the service throughout the day. This helped to ensure that every child received high quality care and learning experiences. Busier times of the day, such as staff lunches, did not impact on experiences for children as this was supported by the management team should they need more support. Staff understood the importance of ensuring children were safe and cared for throughout their day. They used walkie talkies to communicate messages and inform each other of children's movements. They communicated well during transition times including lunchtime and at the end of the day, when children were preparing to go home.

Staff deployment took account of children's needs and promoted the importance of positive attachments. For example, a child settling in was supported by a consistent adult who had the time and freedom to give them their full attention. This resulted in the child gradually building up their confidence to play and engage with others at their own pace.

Communication and team working enabled consistent approaches and continuity of care for children. Daily updates provided opportunities for staff to reflect on the experiences and opportunities for play, and plan to extend children's interests and learning. More formal team meetings were held regularly which allowed all staff to feel informed and included in decisions and development areas.

Staff had been safely recruited and were suitably registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). A robust induction programme supported newly appointed staff to meet children's needs. This helped staff settle into their role and become part of the staff team.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 31 May 2024, the provider must be able to demonstrate that all members of staff working in the service understand and can implement current Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings guidance.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) ensure cleaning procedures are implemented and regularly monitored
- b) ensure staff reduce the risk of infection or cross contamination within the nursery by washing their hands and support children to wash their hands effectively in line with guidance
- c) ensure that effective systems are in place to identify gaps in staff skills, knowledge and in the implementation of best practice guidance in hygiene. Any actions arising should be recorded and taken forward.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.22).

This requirement was made on 29 April 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

Staff had all had additional training to ensure all infection prevention and control measures were in place. We saw regularly cleaning of areas within the nursery and handwashing carried out throughout the day by children and staff. An outside sink had been installed since the previous inspection, which meant children

could independently wash hands while outdoors or prior to going indoors. Quality assurance processes were in place to observe and record staff were effectively carrying out infection control and prevention measures in keeping both children and staff safe.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 2

By 31 May 2024, the provider must ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children is promoted across the service.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) submit a plan detailing how the risks to children's safety posed in the outdoor spaces will be addressed
- b) ensure control measures are discussed, understood and agreed with staff
- c) further develop risk assessments to ensure these are effective and working as planned to maintain a safe environment. These should be clear and easily understood by all people involved in the service. Staff involvement in developing the risk assessments will support this to be a shared approach and impact positively on these being implemented into practice.

This is to comply with Regulation 4 (1)(a) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17).

This requirement was made on 29 April 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

The service had submitted a plan detailing how the risks to children's safety posed in the outdoor spaces will be addressed. During the inspection, we observed staff carrying out appropriate safety checks within the indoor and outdoor spaces. A review had been carried out of all areas since the previous inspection to identify risks in the outdoor environment. Risk assessments had been developed with the involvement of staff to ensure a safe environment. Team meetings highlighted control measures required to keep children safe and reflected on staff understanding and knowledge to ensure child safety.

Met - within timescales

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

In order to ensure children are supported to achieve, staff should develop the way they record and plan for children's learning. This should recognise significant learning and development as well as identifying how children can be supported in future. This should be responsive to children's needs and choices.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

This area for improvement was made on 29 April 2024.

Action taken since then

Existing processes had been developed. Significant moments in a child's learning and development was recorded including milestones and new skills. Observations were recorded and progress uploaded to the online app shared with parents. Progress was tracked and monitored regularly, linking to children's developmental milestones. Developmental progress reports were shared with parents. Child's plans will be reviewed and updated regularly, ensuring it remains responsive and relevant as the child's needs evolve. We will establish a collaborative approach including children and families in this process

This area of improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's play and learning, management and staff should create environments that inspire children's imagination, curiosity and creativity. Children should be provided with more developmentally appropriate opportunities to discover, explore, experiment and problem solve.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: '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); and 'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.31).

This area for improvement was made on 29 April 2024.

Action taken since then

The service had reviewed spaces across the nursery. We observed playrooms had a range of both structured and free play activities. This was evidenced within the planning process and learning journals. The service had added a variety of open-ended materials and should continue to develop this, for example, within the home play area. A range of activities provided opportunities to inspire children's imagination, curiosity and

creativity; for example, mirror painting, sensory play, the mud kitchen and activities around child interest in whales.

This area of improvement has been met.

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?	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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