Drummond Community High School Creche
Day Care of Children

Drummond Community High School
41 Bellevue Place
Edinburgh
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Telephone: 01315 562 651

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 September 2026

Service provided by:
City of Edinburgh Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2004078208

About the service

Drummond Community High School Creche is a registered daycare of children service. The service is delivered from Drummond Community High School, Edinburgh. Children have access to an open plan playroom, snack and dining space, toilets, and an enclosed garden.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 15 children aged between 6 months and those not yet attending primary school at any one time.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 22 and Wednesday 23 September 2026, between 8:25 and 15:45. One inspector carried out the inspection from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with children;
- reviewed survey responses from four staff;
- spoke face to face with three parents;
- spoke with management and staff;
- observed practice and children's experiences; and
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

• Leaders created a caring, inclusive culture where children experienced a strong sense of belonging and positive relationships.
• Children benefited from highly engaging play and learning experiences that supported their confidence, creativity, independence and problem-solving skills.
• Children experienced warm, nurturing relationships with staff who knew them well and supported their wellbeing, confidence and emotional security.
• Parents spoke highly of the care, learning experiences and supportive relationships provided by the service and felt confident in the care their children received.
• Leaders had established a culture of reflection and continuous improvement and were well placed to strengthen moderation and quality assurance arrangements further.
• Recent improvements to resources, learning environments and planning processes had enhanced children's experiences and contributed to positive outcomes.
• Minor improvements to recording arrangements would strengthen oversight, accountability and the accuracy of children's records.

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

Leadership 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Leaders demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement and had created a caring, inclusive and welcoming culture. Staff shared the service's vision and values and understood their role in delivering high-quality experiences for children and families. As a result, children experienced a strong sense of belonging and developed positive relationships throughout the setting.

Children's rights and participation were promoted well through a culture where their views informed the service's vision and values. Values including respect, friendship, honesty and kindness were evident in daily practice. This supported children's participation and reflected the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Leaders had high ambitions for the service and had worked effectively to improve children's outcomes. Staff confidently described improvements made to resources, play spaces and learning environments. These developments better supported children's learning, wellbeing and engagement. One staff member told us, "I feel there is a strong relationship built on trust and respect with families, and I feel that the team are effective at communicating the needs of the children. Families can trust that we are supporting them to the fullest." As a result, children benefited from warm, trusting relationships and felt valued, included and supported.

The team had established a culture of self-evaluation and improvement. A range of approaches were used to gather the views of children and families, including floorbooks, questionnaires, stay-and-play sessions and open events. Self-evaluation informed a clear improvement plan that reflected the emerging needs of children and families. This helped ensure improvement priorities remained relevant and responsive to children's experiences.

Priorities included strengthening support for families through nurture and nature groups and improving intentional planning for children's learning and development. The service had identified moderation as an important part of improving consistency and quality. Plans were in place to introduce regular moderation activities; however, this work was at an early stage of implementation. Emerging arrangements were beginning to support professional reflection, shared learning and a more consistent approach to observation, assessment and planning. The service was well placed to continue developing this area.

A systematic approach to quality assurance supported ongoing monitoring and improvement. Regular quality assurance activity provided leaders with meaningful oversight of practice and supported informed improvement planning. We discussed how quality assurance activity could become more evaluative by more clearly recording strengths, learning, resulting actions and their impact. This would provide stronger evidence of impact and further strengthen links between quality assurance, self-evaluation and improvement.

While quality assurance arrangements were largely effective, we identified a few minor recording issues. Review dates in a small number of care strategies were unclear and some policies required updating to reflect current guidance relating infection prevention and control and nappy changing procedures. Addressing these areas would further strengthen leadership oversight and provide assurance that children's needs continue to be effectively monitored and reviewed.

Leaders promoted a culture of learning and reflection which supported staff to develop their skills and take an active role in improvement. Staff described opportunities to lead improvement priorities, mentor colleagues and discuss their professional development through regular supervision. This helped create a skilled and reflective staff team and contributed to consistent, high-quality experiences for children.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: Play learning and developing

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children were highly engaged in a wide range of stimulating play and learning experiences. Staff skilfully followed children's interests and supported child-led learning, creating rich opportunities for children to explore, investigate and direct their own play. As a result, children were motivated, curious and fully involved in their learning indoors and outdoors.

The learning environment supported children's creativity, independence and problem-solving skills. Children confidently explored open-ended resources, participated enthusiastically in loose parts play, storytelling, sensory experiences and creative activities, and made meaningful choices about their learning. During junk modelling activities, children proudly shared their creations and ideas with others, demonstrating imagination, confidence and a strong sense of achievement.

Children benefited from high-quality outdoor play experiences that promoted confidence, resilience and appropriate supervised risk-taking. Resources such as large piping, balance beams and trim trail equipment encouraged children to test their abilities and develop physical skills. We observed children working collaboratively to construct dens using loose parts and natural materials, negotiating ideas, solving problems and developing strong teamwork and communication skills.

Practitioners were highly responsive to children's individual needs and adapted experiences effectively to promote participation and inclusion. Children requiring additional support benefited from nurturing interactions and tailored learning opportunities. Staff used developmentally appropriate approaches, meaningful conversations and rich learning experiences to support children's communication, numeracy and emotional wellbeing. As a result, children participated successfully at their own level, developed increasing confidence and experienced success in learning that reflected their individual stage of development.

Planning and assessment arrangements supported a highly responsive and child-centred approach to learning. Practitioners demonstrated a strong understanding of children's interests, progress and developmental needs and used assessment information effectively to shape meaningful learning experiences, identify learning opportunities and provide appropriate challenge. This ensured learning experiences remained relevant, engaging and responsive to children's individual stages of development. As a result, children benefited from learning experiences that reflected their interests, built on their strengths and supported continued progress across all areas of learning and development.

Recent improvements to resources, learning environments and planning processes had enhanced children's experiences and contributed to positive outcomes. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of children's progress and used assessment and tracking information to support learning and individual development.

The service continued to reflect on and refine its approaches to assessment and planning. Further strengthening the recording of specific and measurable next steps would enhance how children's progress and the impact of learning experiences are evidenced over time.

Children are supported to achieve — 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children experienced warm, nurturing and highly responsive care from staff who knew them well and were sensitive to their individual needs. Interactions were consistently kind, respectful and supportive, helping children to develop confidence and a sense of belonging. Staff responded sensitively to children's emotional needs and used positive approaches to support them through minor disagreements and challenges. As a result, children were developing confidence, resilience and social skills within an environment where positive relationships were promoted effectively.

The nurturing approach taken by staff supported secure attachments and helped children feel included, respected and valued. Parents spoke positively about the care, support and experiences provided for their children. One parent highlighted the caring and consistent staff team as a particular strength, describing leaders and practitioners as approachable and effective in supporting children and families. They spoke about the calm, nurturing atmosphere and the high-quality opportunities available for children to play and learn. Another parent told us their child was very happy attending the nursery and regularly asked to come each day, which they felt reflected how much their child enjoyed being there. These positive experiences demonstrated that children benefited from secure, trusting relationships with staff and experienced a strong sense of wellbeing, belonging and emotional security within the nursery environment.

Snack and mealtimes were calm, social experiences where children enjoyed freshly prepared, nutritious food. Staff sat with children, supporting positive interactions, communication and independence. As a result, children experienced nurturing routines that promoted their wellbeing and sense of belonging.

Personal planning arrangements supported children's individual wellbeing, care and development needs effectively. Records contained relevant information about children's needs and the approaches staff should take to support them. This helped promote consistency across the staff team and ensured children received care and support that was responsive to their individual circumstances.

Personal plans reflected a child-centred approach and provided staff with clear guidance about how best to support children's assessed needs. This helped ensure care and support remained responsive to children's wellbeing, progress and development. We identified a few minor recording issues. For example, dates were not always recorded consistently and there was scope to provide clearer evidence of who had completed, reviewed or updated some records. Addressing these areas would further strengthen oversight and accountability while supporting the accuracy of children's records.

The service demonstrated a strong commitment to partnership working and recognised the importance of family engagement in supporting positive outcomes for children. Families were welcomed into the nursery and we observed positive and respectful interactions throughout the inspection. Staff used a range of approaches to gather feedback and encourage family involvement in the life of the service. Initiatives such as the Peeple (Peep) learning together programme and nurture and nature sessions demonstrated the service's commitment to supporting children and families beyond the nursery environment. While participation in some family learning opportunities had been limited, staff demonstrated a reflective approach and were actively exploring ways to reduce barriers and further strengthen family engagement.

Parents consistently described staff as caring, approachable and supportive. They valued the positive relationships developed with their children and highlighted the compassion and understanding shown during challenging periods for their families. Several parents commented on the consistency of the staff team and the positive impact this had on their children's wellbeing and sense of security. As a result, families felt valued, supported and confident in the care and learning experiences provided by the service.

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

The provider should ensure that staff have constant access to systems and records to enable them to:
- Observe, assess, record and monitor children's developmental progress on a regular basis.
- Ensure children's next steps in learning are identified and personal plans are in place specific to each child.
National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.
Standard 6 - Support and development.

This area for improvement was made on 5 September 2017.

Action taken since then

The service introduced responsive planning and tracking systems to support the regular observation, assessment and monitoring of children's progress. Learning journals, floor books, developmental tracking tools and personal plans were used to record children's learning, wellbeing and next steps. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of how assessment information informed planning and individual support.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To provide children with feeling a sense of achievement whilst at crèche we recommend that staff look at ways as we suggested.
National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:
Standard 11: Access to resources.
Standard 13 Improving the Service.

This area for improvement was made on 5 September 2017.

Action taken since then

The service enhanced play and learning opportunities through improvements to resources, learning environments and child-led experiences. Children were provided with a wide range of creative, open-ended and outdoor learning opportunities which promoted confidence, independence, achievement and a sense of success in their learning. The use of an online platform and display wall ensured children's achievements were celebrated.
This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To allow parents the opportunity to be involved in the continued development of the service we recommend that the crèche should develop a formal system for gaining parents views and evaluate the outcomes to help her further improve the service. In addition audit/monitoring systems should be developed and implemented to evaluate the effectiveness of staff and how the crèche ensures the health, welfare and safety of children and use this information to make improvements.
National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16.
Standard: 14 Well-managed service.

This area for improvement was made on 5 September 2017.

Action taken since then

A range of approaches were developed to gather feedback from children and families, including questionnaires, floor books, stay-and-play sessions and open events. Self-evaluation and quality assurance systems were established to monitor practice, identify priorities for improvement and inform service development.
This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

In order for staff to support children with a specific medical needs, we recommend that the provider should include the following to each care plan:
- what would happen to a child if they presented a reaction
- what action should staff take in the event of a reaction
- what measures will be put in place to prevent the child taking a reaction.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:
Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 5 September 2017.

Action taken since then

The service strengthened personal planning arrangements through the development of child-centred care plans containing clear information about children's health, wellbeing and support needs. Medication records

and monitoring systems were introduced to guide staff practice and support the safe and consistent administration of medication, helping to promote positive outcomes for children.
This area for 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.scot.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good

Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good

Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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