St. Mary's School
Day Care of Children

Stable Block
St Mary's School
Abbey Park
Melrose
TD6 9LN

Telephone: 01896 822517

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
17 January 2019

Service provided by:
St. Mary's School, Melrose

Service provider number:
SP2003003590

Service no:
CS2003016201

About the service

This service has been registered since 2002.

St. Mary's School Kindergarten is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children at any one time between the ages of 18 months to not yet attending primary school, of whom no more than six are under two years old.

The Kindergarten is situated within a converted stable block within the grounds of St. Mary's School in the town of Melrose, close to local shops and amenities. The service operates from two rooms and also has the use of the adjoining hall for indoor, physical activities.

Aims of the service include:

- To provide contemporary nursery day care of the highest standard
- To create a happy, friendly and caring atmosphere as well as a stimulating environment which is conducive to learning
- To create good communication between parents and staff.'

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (also known as GIRFEC). Set up by the Scottish Government, GIRFEC is a national approach to working in a consistent way with all children and young people. It is underpinned by the principles of prevention and early intervention. The approach helps services focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people - and what they can do to improve.

What people told us

We spoke to six children who were confident and happy to tell us things they enjoyed such as 'I like painting and dressing up'.

We spoke to six parents throughout the inspection. It was clear they were very happy with the care their children received and that children were 'developing great and were always learning something new'. They held staff and the service in high regard and told us the 'Kindy is fabulous and staff are so warm and welcoming'.

We received eight of the 12 questionnaires we gave the service to give to parents/carers. Comments were very positive and included:

'This is an excellent kindergarten. My older (child) went to it and loved it so I had no reservations about my 2 year old (child) going there, (child) did several settling sessions before starting and I had lots of discussion with staff regarding (childs) needs.

(Child) has settled wonderfully and is excited to go and when you drop (child) there (child) is comfortable and confident to go and play. The staff are warm and welcoming and always cheerful. The children have lots out to do and they have fantastic outside space to use. The staff are always giving feedback and there are days when they do specific things like PE, ICT. I think this is a brilliant introduction for the children into these subjects'.

'My children love going to Kindy. They are excited each morning and come home with lots of stories about what they have enjoyed each day. The staff are warm, friendly and welcoming and the quality of care is wonderful'.

'My child loves attending Kindy. The staff are very approachable and friendly and treat every child as an individual. Staff ensure very young children use best manners. A fabulous learning environment'.

'I know it all sounds too good to be true but this is an amazing nursery. My child that attends St. Mary's nursery loves the staff so much that (child) misses them when (child) is not there .....I cannot recommend this nursery enough'.

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self-assessment in advance of the inspection. We looked at their own improvement plan which identified their priorities for development and how they were taking these forward.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	not assessed
Quality of staffing	not assessed
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

What the service does well

Throughout the service children were confident, settled, busy and having a lot of fun in their play. They were very respected and nurtured as staff interacted with them in a warm, caring manner. Children's individual needs were being met very well as detailed information collected when they started gave staff good opportunities to become familiar with each child's health, wellbeing and support needs. We saw staff were very responsive to children's individual needs, giving them help and support when needed. For example, helping children to put coats and shoes on before going outside.

Children's learning stories were good and contained children's artwork, 'All about me' information, photos of them enjoying activities, learning experiences and their achievements. Parents said they really liked looking at these and could access them at any time. A parent told us they saw how their child was "growing in confidence". They also told us they were able to further develop experiences at home, for example encouraging them in learning colours and number recognition. Children were nurtured and respected as their achievements were celebrated, which helped promote their self-esteem. This helped staff to identify where they could further challenge children's learning appropriately. For example, through puzzles and activities.

Children had good opportunities to be active, healthy and get fresh air as they played outside every day. Freeflow access to the outside play area meant children could make choices in what they wanted to do. We saw them having lots of fun running around, playing on bikes, climbing on the large wooden play equipment and 'making castles' in the sandpit. Children were having fun in the mud kitchen, being creative and

transporting sand to 'make dinner'. Children had good opportunities to learn about their local community and the natural environment as they went on regular walks and weekly trips to Wooplaw Woods.

We could see the service was very well supported through the management team and included as part of the school. Weekly meetings with the whole school and service ensured all areas for development were discussed and any areas for any improvement were identified.

Although staff found some training courses difficult to access, they were very proactive in identifying specific training to improve outcomes for children. For example, staff were progressing Pre-birth to three training in-house and were including their learning in making daily play more child-led. This meant children had good opportunities to make choices in what they wanted to do. The staff team worked very well together and were keen to take on suggestions to move the service forward.

What the service could do better

Most children attending the Kindergarten were confident and capable learners. However, we found it difficult to track some children's individual development and learning through the observations and next steps recorded in their learning journals. Staff have agreed to record significant learning within detailed and focussed observations. This will help staff identify clear next steps that will support and challenge children's learning. Planning should also be reviewed to ensure that learning experiences provided for the children have sufficient breadth, depth and challenge. Evaluations should focus on children's progress and consolidate individual learning. We will follow up on the progress of this at the next inspection.

The service had started to introduce 'loose parts' play and were building on this. Staff were very enthusiastic on developing these opportunities for children. We agreed with this area for development as this would give children more opportunities for challenge, to be inquisitive and promote curiosity in their play. We directed them to the Care Inspectorate 'HUB' and 'Play Scotland' where they could access loose parts toolkits.

At snack time we saw children being independent in making choices and serving their own snack. We asked the service to consider further ways to include more opportunities for children to be independent and create choice. For example, providing smaller jugs so children can pour their own drinks and cutlery to spread their toast. The service agreed with this.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

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

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

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

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

Staff should make sure children are given plates to place their food on, encouraging good food hygiene practice and helping to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

This recommendation was made on 18 January 2017.

Action taken on previous recommendation
The children had immediately been given plates to use for snack.

This recommendation has been met.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
18 Jan 2017	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

Date	Type	Gradings	
28 Jan 2015	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good
15 Jan 2013	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	6 - Excellent 5 - Very good 6 - Excellent 5 - Very good
18 Nov 2010	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	6 - Excellent Not assessed Not assessed Not assessed
16 Sep 2008	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good 5 - Very good

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