

Little Monkeys Cramond House Day Care of Children

Cramond House
2 Kirk Cramond
Edinburgh
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Telephone: 01313 363 089

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 June 2025

Service provided by:
Little Monkeys Limited

Service provider number:
SP2003002999

Service no:
CS2012307903

About the service

Little Monkeys Cramond House is one of three services provided by Little Monkeys Limited in the City of Edinburgh. They provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 140 children under the age of twelve-years; of whom no more than 100 children are not yet of an age to attend primary school.

The nursery are in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council. Children are collected from Cramond Primary School to attend the after-school service.

The premises are set in extensive private grounds in the Cramond area of Edinburgh. The large detached building is used solely by the nursery. The large reception hall and waiting area is used by administrative staff to enable safe entry and exit from the building. Off the reception area is the gym hall used by all age groups, and an indoor nature explorers playroom. The ground floor accommodates several interlinked rooms used by children aged birth to three-years of age (Bush Babies, Gibbons, and Capuchins). The first floor has several interlinking rooms used by children aged three to five-years of age (Chimps). The top floor is used for office and staff space. The basement is used by school aged children. This area comprises of three rooms used in a free flow manner. There are outdoor areas for children to use along with woodland areas and the beach, which is within easy walking distance. There are on-site parking facilities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 4 June 2025 between 08:40 and 17:40, and continued on 5 June 2025 between 09:45 and 14:45. Two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate 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 throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with children using the service and some of their families
- considered feedback from 26 families and five staff through an online form
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents relating to the care of children and the management of the service.

Key messages

- Children were nurtured and supported throughout their daily experiences.
- Staff knew children well and were familiar with strategies that met their individual needs.
- Staff had a good understanding of how children learn through play and valued children's right to play.
- Calm, nurturing spaces in the environment supported children to learn at a pace that was right for them.
- A robust approach to quality assurance and self-evaluation meant that improvements were well led and impacted positively on children.
- Supportive and nurturing leadership in the team meant that staff were very well supported in their role.

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?	4 - 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 quality indicator 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 nurtured and supported throughout their daily experiences. Staff showed kindness and compassion as they warmly welcomed children, took time to listen to them, and responded to their cues. Staff responded to a child who was finding it difficult to settle into the service. They supported the child and parent effectively. Kindness and warmth helped children to feel valued, loved and secure. Parents said, "Dedication of staff - warm and knowledgeable." Another said, "Friendly, welcoming. Nature explorers provision."

Children's emotional wellbeing was promoted by the staff team. Children were familiar with staff that visited from other Little Monkey sites. We heard the visiting staff using children's names when speaking with them, which showed children were respected. We saw school aged children responding well to the calm approach of staff. Secure attachments and quality interactions supported children to feel safe. A parent said, "All the staff know all of the children and they are all great."

The mealtime experience was calmly managed and was working well. All staff had been involved in evaluating and improving the quality of mealtime experiences. We could see evidence in floor books of how changes that were agreed, had been implemented to improve outcomes for children. Children were familiar with mealtime routines, and were now benefitting from opportunities to develop independence through being able to serve their own food and pour drinks. Monitoring and continued reflection supported ongoing improvement. Children were supported to have a safe, unhurried, sociable mealtime experience. A parent said, "Healthy varied menu on offer and good consultation with families on developing the menu. My child gets good helpings and has become good at feeding themselves because of nursery." Another parent said, "My child is dairy intolerant and the nursery have been very accommodating ensuring she doesn't feel left out."

Staff knew children well and were familiar with strategies that met their individual needs. The service had developed systems to gather information in consultation with families that supported the overall wellbeing of children. Communication diaries captured information shared by families. The detail was transferred to key group folders to inform the personal plan. This meant that children received care and support that was tailored to their needs. A parent said, "My older child has a support plan to help with some difficult behaviours he's been having. Staff have involved us every step of the way." Another parent said, "My youngest has trouble settling in the morning but (staff name) has been fantastic at ensuring that there are various ways that he can be distracted and helped through his feelings and upset in the morning."

Sleep routines were responsive to children's needs, and staff knew children's routines and preferences. This helped children rest which supported their wellbeing and overall development. The service monitored children sleeping which ensured they benefitted from a comfortable and safe sleep. A parent said, "Both my children have the opportunity for quiet time in quieter spaces, or a nap if required." Another parent said, "Baby room has a lovely calm sleep room and the chimps room has a cosy room with fairy lights and comfy space to relax. The chimps room also has a den area with covers."

Medication was managed to a good level. Storage of medication and systems for recording medication were in place. They included parental permissions, health plans, and records of administration. Medication audits and reviews were undertaken on a three monthly basis. The service could streamline their medication paperwork to promote a consistent understanding of children's medical needs. This would promote a consistent understanding of children's medical needs ensuring the health and safety of children.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Staff had a good understanding of how children learn through their play. There was a focus on children's rights, promoting their right to play and have fun. Play spaces offered children rich, stimulating, well-resourced areas in which to explore and investigate. Children's interest in space had been extended through a variety of experiences including creating planets with play dough, having star dust in the sand, and pretending to go to the moon. Younger children were discovering butterflies in the tough tray and bugs in the garden. Children's experiences engaged their imagination and enriched their play and learning. A parent said, "An array of creative opportunities from arts, music, dance, free play in the garden." Another said, "Other activities ranges from play based learning, nature school, messy play, baking, story telling, drawing, painting, local trips, sports days, group and individual learning."

Planning was responsive to the interests and needs of children, supporting them to make sustained progress in their learning. Quality assurance ensured that staff were reflective to ensure planning supported children to develop and foster deeper engagement, spark their imagination, and enrich their play and learning. Tracking and monitoring children's individual learning, evidenced the progress children were making at a pace that was right for them. Children were being supported to achieve their potential. In the school age childcare service, families were provided with termly overview of their children's experiences. The service could include some detail of the impact and outcomes for children and young people as a result of their experiences. A parent said, "We receive regular updates on what he's been up to and his developments through the online portal. As well as a one to one every couple of months to ensure he's meeting those milestones and what they can do to help whilst he's at nursery."

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 quality theme as very good.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children and families benefitted from a warm, welcoming and inviting environment. The play spaces had been well thought out and planned for children to explore and play. The potential of the spaces were maximised enabling children to benefit from a range of experiences. Older children listened to a story using headphones in the quiet room; authentic resources supported imaginative play in the home corner as children pretended to cook; younger children explored the water and sand, and school aged children creatively used clay. It was evident that children mattered, and they had been valued and respected throughout the development of this high-quality learning environment. Children were proud of their setting and confidently told us about their experiences. A parent said, "A warm welcome is always there and all staff contribute to this."

Children benefitted from daily access to the outdoors. The garden spaces had been developed to provide opportunities for children to climb, jump, and use their imagination with the large loose parts. There was a mud kitchen which had a good variety of resources for children to experiment with. Staff had ensured that the resources in the garden were inviting, interesting, and supported children's curiosity and creativity. The nature explorers benefitted from a well designed area that provided a stimulating space for children to play. A child told us they were in a castle as they climbed a tree. The environment enabled children to learn key skills through play and having fun. A parent said, "The children are involved in an eclectic mix of activities both inside and in the beautiful woodland grounds of the nursery. They also have the opportunity to visit Cramond foreshore which is literally on the doorstep of the nursery - fantastic!" Another parent said, "I particularly like Nature Explorers." Another said, "Going to the beach, playing in the garden, and going on day trips are some of her favourite activities. It's clear that when I drop her off and pick her up, she loves the outdoors and the garden."

The safety and wellbeing of children was supported through well managed systems and processes. Regularly reviewed risk assessments were in place and effectively highlighted hazards and appropriate actions to minimise potential risks to children and staff. In the space used by the nature explorers, the space next to the car park was screened to provide privacy for children, and staff were on high alert to keep children safe. High fences and gates with coded locks kept children safe as they played in the garden. The staff team had responded to the Care Inspectorate 'Safe, Inspect, Monitor, Observe and Act (SIMOA)' campaign by reviewing and developing the systems in place to keep children safe. This meant that effective communication systems and risk assessments were in place to ensure children were safe and accounted for. A parent said, "The nursery has gone to great lengths to increase security since it was raised at the PLG. There were concerns around safety of the children in the garden - due to fencing/access - after the Southport incident and they have addressed these. They have also ensured the front door is properly secured and weighted so that it closes."

Improvements had been made with cleaning procedures and with the maintenance of the building. Systems and processes had been implemented that had improved the cleanliness of the environment. Staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities in keeping the environment clean across the day. The spaces that accommodated children had been renovated providing a well-maintained environment for children. The health and wellbeing of children and staff was protected as a result. A parent said, "I feel like maintenance is addressed quickly by the nursery and the environment is safe."

Infection prevention and control practices had improved since the last inspection. Hand washing was carried out routinely and at key times, and staff were vigilant in cleaning dummies in line with good practice guidance. Children were supported to develop hand washing routines from an early stage. This supported their health and wellbeing. A parent said, "Nursery is clean."

Children's information was securely stored and managed. Communication diaries were stored safely in playrooms, and staff were aware of their responsibilities in keeping any recorded information safely stored. This ensured that children and families' personal information was stored confidentially in line with best practice.

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 quality theme as very good.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The vision, values and aims continued to be reviewed and developed by the service focusing on improvements and positive outcomes for all. Families told us about the trusting relationships they had with staff. The happy and welcoming ethos in the service promoted a positive atmosphere for children to play and learn. A parent said, "It's a family from family environment. Every member of staff know the children, their siblings and the parents. This makes children feel safe, understood and happy. This makes parents reassured."

The current improvement plan was targeted and focused on outcomes for children. Improvement priorities had included mealtimes and the environment. It was evident that many aspects of these priorities had been actioned and had resulted in improved outcomes for children.

Strong leadership in the service supported staff to develop confidence and knowledge in their roles. We heard the views of a passionate, motivated staff team who described their improvement journey. They were aware of their accountability and responsibilities in caring for the children in the service and developing relationships with families. The leadership team were supporting staff as they continued to develop professionally, and were ensuring staff wellbeing was protected through offering various support strategies. This created a positive culture across the team. Staff told us they felt their wellbeing was supported by the management team.

Effective policies, procedures and robust quality assurance processes were in place to support the development and improvement of the service. The management team and staff were committed to the ongoing development to ensure children reached their full potential. They recognised that inclusive and meaningful quality assurance and self-evaluation was resulting in a shared approach to making sustainable improvements to the service. Staff told us about reflecting on their practice through peer review. We suggested the use of reflective diaries to support dialogue and map the improvements in outcomes for children as a result. Reflective questions were being used to gather the views of staff to enable them to reflect on how the service was doing, how they knew, and what they would do next. Feedback was regularly sought from children and families to ensure their wishes and choices were fully considered. A member of staff said, "Our use of floor books has enhanced children's voice and participation, encouraging reflection and deeper learning. We've also seen improvements in staff collaboration, professional development, and the consistent use of observation to inform practice. These achievements contribute to a warm, inclusive environment where children thrive and are supported to reach their full potential." Another said, "I am encouraged to reflect on practice using a variety of tools and frameworks. We have self evaluation floor books that everyone is encouraged to be involved with."

Children, families and staff were regularly involved in giving feedback about the service and suggestions on how it could be improved. Children were asked for their views when developing the nursery spaces. This gave them a sense of belonging. Families told us they had an opportunity to feedback on their experience when they attended coffee mornings. Children and families' views were valued and influenced improvement in the service. A parent said, "Staff are always happy to hear any idea and feedback." Another parent said, "I attend PLG meetings and regular feedback is welcomed."

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff were respectful and very supportive of one another. They were warm, caring, and sensitive in their approach and demonstrated positive team working. This promoted a happy, loving, and secure environment for children. A member of staff said, "In our setting, we've achieved several successes that reflect our commitment to high-quality early learning and care. One of our key strengths is the positive, nurturing relationships we build with children and families." A parent said, "Dedication of staff - warm and knowledgeable."

Staff had clear roles and responsibilities. Effective systems supported children's safety and wellbeing when transitioning from indoors to outdoors. Staff consistently followed procedures and supported children to walk safely and independently through the building. Procedures ensured quality care and support for children.

The service recognised the importance of following a safe recruitment procedure. All staff that required to be registered with the Scottish Social Service Council (SSSC) had the appropriate registration in place. The Early Learning and Childcare National Induction Resource was used in a meaningful way. This supported staff to familiarise themselves with policies and procedures in the service, which enhanced the induction period. This demonstrated the services commitment to developing their staff team to ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and values needed to enable children to achieve their potential.

Effective use was made of differing skills and experiences of staff across the staff team. A play therapist supported reflection around children's play experiences. Staff told us about recent training including 'sign along' that had responded to the individual needs of children. The skills being developed through staff continued professional learning, supported staff to develop skills and to reflect on practice.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 31 October 2024, the provider must ensure that risk assessments are effective and working as planned to maintain a safe environment.

To do this, the provider must ensure all risks are fully identified and mitigations put in place. Risk assessments must be clearly 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 The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI2011/210) Regulation 4(1)(a)(d) Welfare of Users.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states:

'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.17).

This requirement was made on 27 August 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

The safety of children was paramount during the inspection. Staff understanding of their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe had improved. Risk assessment had been reviewed and developed, and dynamic risk assessment across the service meant staff were reflecting on potential risks and mitigating against them. No risks were apparent or identified during the inspection visit.

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

To support children's wellbeing and ensure they are supported to achieve their potential, the provider should ensure children's personal plans include individual strategies of support where required. These should be regularly reviewed and updated.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states:

'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 27 August 2024.

Action taken since then

Observation of children and chats with key staff confirmed that staff knew children well. Staff were familiar with strategies that were in place to support the individual needs of children. The information recorded informed staff about the care and support that was needed to support children, and this was reviewed and updated to ensure children's current needs were met. The service could continue to monitor personal plans ensuring that information noted within communication diaries is transferred and extended within the personal plan. This will ensure a robust system to ensure detail about individual children is considered and steps taken to change the care and support accordingly.

This area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's development, the provider should support staff to access training or learning opportunities to enhance their understanding of child development, relevant theory and practice, to provide high quality play and learning experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states:

'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).

This area for improvement was made on 27 August 2024.

Action taken since then

Staff told us about training they had received and about the impact on their practice. This included children's rights training and sign along. Staff were at differing stages in the implementation of the training. The management team could continue to support staff to develop practice taking account of their learning. Reflective practice through peer learning and the use of reflective questions implemented by the management team will support continued development.

This area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment, the provider should ensure cleaning procedures are implemented and regularly monitored. They should ensure that effective systems are in place to identify gaps in staff skills, knowledge, and in the implementation of best practice guidance in hygiene.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states:

'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.22).

This area for improvement was made on 27 August 2024.

Action taken since then

The environment was observed as clean and well maintained. Staff followed cleaning routines across the day and were aware of their role in maintaining a clean and well-maintained environment. Families told us they felt the environment was clean and well-maintained. Self-evaluation floor books demonstrated the work that had been undertaken to improve the environment. The management team were responsive to reports of any maintenance issues.

This area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure children's rights are promoted and upheld, the provider should support staff to adopt a rights based approach.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states:

'My human rights are central to the organisations that support and care for me' (HSCS 4.1).

This area for improvement was made on 27 August 2024.

Action taken since then

Staff told us that training in children's rights had supported them to develop a rights based approach ensuring children's rights are promoted and upheld. They said that there is a better understanding of children's rights in making choices in their play and that children are respected.

This area for improvement is met.

Previous area for improvement 5

To protect children's health and wellbeing, and to reduce the risk of the spread of infection, the provider should ensure that there are effective infection prevention and control measures in place. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that effective hand washing measures are in place for children and staff in line with current guidance. Staff should ensure children's dummies are cleaned effectively before use in line with current guidance.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states:

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 27 August 2024.

Action taken since then

Hand washing was seen to be implemented at key times and staff used personal protective equipment appropriately. There were no issues in the implementation of infection prevention and control procedures identified during the inspection.

This area for improvement is 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?	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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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