

## Balmedie School Nursery Day Care of Children

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Aberdeen  
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Telephone: 01358 742474

Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 15 February 2018

**Service provided by:**  
Aberdeenshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000029

**Care service number:**  
CS2007164964

## About the service

Balmedie School Nursery has been registered since 2008. It is registered as a Day Care of Children service to provide care to a maximum of 50 children aged 3 to those not attending primary school at Balmedie School Nursery and for a maximum of 24 children at the Potterton annexe.

Balmedie School Nursery is located in a purpose built premises within the grounds of Balmedie Primary School. The Potterton annexe operates from a community hall situated in the village of Potterton, approximately 3 miles west of Balmedie. Balmedie nursery consists of a large playroom, cloakroom, kitchen area and toilets. The children have direct access to an attractive outdoor area from the playroom. At Potterton, the children have access to a large playroom and toilet facilities. There is a secure outdoor play area and the children regularly go for walks in the local community.

The vision and aims of the service are to "provide a welcoming, safe, happy, nurturing and stimulating environment in which everyone is encouraged to be the best they can be". We check services are meeting the principles of Getting it right for every child (also known as GIRFEC). This is Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work with the services that can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC. They are: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. They are often referred to as the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

## What people told us

For this inspection we received 13 completed Care Standards Questionnaires (CSQs) and we spoke to six parents and carers. Responses indicated that parents were happy with the service, commenting positively about the care and support their child was given and the caring and kind staff. However, a concern was raised about how staff dealt with challenging behaviour. This is discussed in the body of the report.

Parents comments included:

"There is a lot of interaction between services and children are always happy and enjoy sharing their stories of what they have been doing with their friends".

"My child started in summer and was welcomed to the nursery and we had plenty of opportunity to settle before starting full time. As parents there are opportunities for us to be approached for feedback. My child is happy and really enjoys coming to nursery to play with their friends".

"My child started in January and is settling really well. They had settling in visits which helped them to feel at home in the service. My child has plenty of choice and enjoys telling me about their day. The outdoor area is well used and my child loves playing there with their friends. We have a suggestions box which parents can use to share ideas".

"The staff are really helpful and have communicated well about my child's progress and development. His lead carer has been amazing and my child can only say good things about her. All staff are approachable and friendly".

"The staff are welcoming, the nursery looks clean, bright and cheerful with enough space in and outdoors, snacks are planned and are healthy and most of all my child is happy and excited to attend nursery and looks forward to it everyday".

"I feel confident that my child feels happy and secure in the nursery environment, supported by very professional, caring staff. They are always happy to go and they talk enthusiastically about their experience there. We are delighted with the service at Balmedie nursery".

There were approximately 35 children present at Balmedie nursery in the morning sessions, 34 in the afternoon class and nine children at the Potterton annexe. The children were settled and were engaged in their play throughout the session. Their comments included:

"I live in Scotland. My granny and granddad live in England. I have been on a plane to fly there".

"I like being in my house".

"I like writing my name and I did it all by myself".

## 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 and quality assurance processes. These demonstrated their priorities for development and how they were monitoring the quality of the provision within the service.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

## Quality of care and support

### Findings from the inspection

Staff had developed positive relationships with the children and their families in their care. This helped families feel included and welcomed. Kind and caring staff used lots of praise to improve children's confidence and self-esteem.

As previously recommended, personal plans with information including any medical needs, emotional support and children's likes, dislikes and preferences were in place and reviewed with parents every six months. This helped staff meet the children's health and wellbeing needs.

Personal plans with strategies to support children with additional support needs were in place. These effectively helped staff ensure children felt included and supported children to reach their full potential. This previous recommendation had been met.

There were detailed plans on display to inform staff on how to support and manage individual children's medication or allergies. Medication care plans were reviewed regularly with parents to ensure the information remained current and up to date. At Potterton, systems were in place to check children's medication was brought in daily to help keep children safe and well.

To help safeguard children, staff had completed annual child protection training and through discussion were able to tell us about situations where they had supported children and their families. Chronologies detailing

significant events which may have an impact on a child's life were well completed and reported to the head teacher.

To help children achieve and reach their full potential, observations of children at play were recorded in interactive learning journals and shared with parents. However, the recording of these observations were inconsistent and did not always focus on significant learning and were not used to inform planning. Staff discussed how recent training had developed their understanding of observation and assessment and how this would impact on their practice. This included introducing new planning formats to help plan interesting activities supportive of children's individual needs.

The nursery promoted a healthy lifestyle and children enjoyed a nutritious snack. They were involved in preparing fruit and cheese and were able to serve themselves. However, there could be more opportunities to further develop children's independence and support their social skills.

Children were kept fit and healthy with daily outdoor play, weekly walks to the woods and opportunities to run around in the school hall.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 4 - good

## Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

The spacious playroom was very attractive and supported children's choice and free play. The learning environment had undergone significant changes to engage children and promote literacy and numeracy development. For example the construction area supported creative play and inquiry skills with opportunities to build structures and play with the wooden crane and other role play equipment. A variety of interesting stationery were enjoyed by the children in the writing area. Child - led investigative play should now be embedded in all areas of the nursery to challenge and motivate children.

At Potterton, children were engaged with a variety of activities planned to support children's interests and development. For example, the water tray was resourced with tubes and funnels for the children to mix and pour. Cameras and voice recorders were used by the children to help develop their skills and confidence when using technology.

A safety playground surface helped keep children safe and free from injury when playing outdoors. We saw some resources to support creativity and to help develop physical skills. Children enjoyed building with crates and playing with a wooden train. Other opportunities included gardening, climbing and playing with a mud kitchen. Staff advised they were developing their understanding of loose parts to further develop the outdoor learning

experience. The document My World Outdoors gives examples of inexpensive outdoor play opportunities. This can be found at: <http://hub.careinspectorate.com/>

Noticeboards in the cloakroom and nursery entrance provided information for parents. Parents were able to access the playroom at the beginning and end of the session. This meant they felt included and more able to discuss any issues with staff.

Good practice infection control procedures were in place to keep children safe and well. Children were encouraged to be very responsible and respectful of their environment and tidy away their toys. As a result the resources looked clean, in good condition and fun to play with.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 4 – good

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

Staff were welcoming and supportive to the children and families in their care. They worked well with parents to support children to settle. We saw children treated with respect and any behaviour issues were resolved through discussion.

Senior staff were beginning to feel more confident in their role of managing the service. Staff were more aware of their roles and responsibilities and were supportive of the senior practitioners. As a result they were starting to well as a team to help meet the needs of the children.

Staff were encouraged to have leadership roles relevant to their strengths and experience. For example, staff were involved in developing the construction area, writing area and woodland learning experience. Over time, this will help staff feel more valued and respected.

Some staff did not have current first aid and food hygiene training to help keep children safe and well. As a result, not all staff had the skills and knowledge to support children in cooking activities. We discussed ensuring staff without a current food hygiene certificate did not cook with the children to help keep them safe and well.

Staff were enthusiastic and committed to further develop their knowledge and understanding to improve outcomes for children. For example, they had completed training in observation and assessment to support children progress. Staff were keen to further develop their knowledge of meaningful learning experiences and loose parts play. Staff should ensure they keep a record of any professional learning with details of how this impacted on their practice.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

## Quality of management and leadership

### Findings from the inspection

Staff spoke positively about the support and guidance given by the principle teacher who regularly visited the service. She had worked hard to develop staff confidence and enthusiasm. As a result, staff were motivated and eager to make improvements to the service. Regular management meetings were held to discuss any issues and to support improvement to the service. Weekly staff planning meetings helped involve staff in the smooth running of the nursery.

In-service training days were used effectively to help staff develop their skills and knowledge to improve outcomes for children. For example, they had discussed ways to develop staff interactions with children to support their learning.

Informal staff monitoring and staff self-evaluation helped inform annual personal development meetings. We discussed introducing regular individual staff meetings to support staff develop their skills and knowledge.

Previous recommendations from The Care Inspectorate had been used effectively to support self-evaluation of the service. Areas for development were used to create an improvement plan. Areas for development included developing personal care plans for all the children. Staff were aware of the documents Building the Ambition and How Good is Our Early Learning and childcare (HGIOELCC). Building the Ambition had been used to support some self-evaluation, for example, they had looked at 'What is a Quality Service'. These documents should now be fully used embedded in practice to support improvement. Staff should become familiar with the Health and Social Care Standards to support improved outcomes for children.

The nursery used various strategies to involve parents and children in making improvements to the service. For example, parents received regular newsletters. We discussed reintroducing parent forums and questionnaires to fully involve parents. Children's ideas and interests were used to plan activities.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 4 - good

## 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

To help keep children safe and support their overall health and wellbeing, personal plans should be developed for all children and reviewed with parents at least every six months or earlier if necessary. Information should include:

- a) Emergency contact details
- b) Medical information
- c) Allergy information.

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

**This recommendation was made on 29 March 2017.**

#### Action taken on previous recommendation

Personal plans with information including any medical needs, emotional support and children's likes, dislikes and preferences were in place and reviewed with parents every six months. Therefore, this recommendation had been met.

#### Recommendation 2

To help keep children safe, systems to ensure the safe administration of medication should be reviewed using the document, Management of medication in daycare of children and childminding services, found at:

<http://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/189567/childrens-service-medication-guidance.pdf>

Systems should include:

- a) New forms clearly showing symptoms
- b) A recording method to show all medication stored on the premises are in date and ready for use
- c) A recording method at Potterton to show parents have brought medication into the premises.
- d) An updated policy

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

**This recommendation was made on 29 March 2017.**

### Action taken on previous recommendation

There were detailed plans on display to inform staff on how to support and manage individual children's medication or allergies. Medication care plans were reviewed regularly with parents. At Potterton, systems were in place to check children's medication was brought in daily. An updated policy was available to read. Therefore, this recommendation had been met.

### Recommendation 3

To support children achieve, care plans for children with specific needs should be fully completed with clear evaluations of progress.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 6: Support and Development

**This recommendation was made on 29 March 2017.**

### Action taken on previous recommendation

Care plans with strategies to support children with additional support needs were in place. These effectively helped staff ensure children felt included and supported children to reach their full potential. Therefore, this recommendation had been met.

### Recommendation 4

To fully engage children and extend their thinking and learning, activities should be responsive to the children's interests and learning needs. More opportunities should be provided for open-ended creative play and to explore natural resources. Possible ideas to promote sand and water play can be found at:

<http://www.tomsensori.blogspot.co.uk/>

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 5: Quality of Experience and Standard 11: Access to Resources

**This recommendation was made on 29 March 2017.**

### Action taken on previous recommendation

The learning environment for the children had undergone significant changes to engage children and promote literacy and numeracy development. For example, the construction area supported creative play and inquiry skills. A variety of interesting stationery were enjoyed by the children in the writing area. This recommendation had been met. Child-led investigative play should now be embedded in all areas of the nursery to challenge and motivate children.

### Recommendation 5

To help improve outcomes for children, all staff should be confident about their role and responsibilities.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 12: Confidence in Staff and Standard 11: Well-Managed Service

**This recommendation was made on 29 March 2017.**



## Action taken on previous recommendation

Staff were growing in confidence and were beginning to have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities. As a result they were starting to well as a team to help meet the needs of the children. This recommendation had been met. However, opportunities to further develop skills in leadership should be continued.

## Recommendation 6

To support improvement to the service, management should ensure quality assurance systems are in place. These should include:

- a) Staff monitoring
- b) Playroom observations
- c) Self-evaluation using documents such as Building the Ambition and How Good Is Our Early Learning and Child Care (HGIOELCC).

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16. Standard 13: Improving the Service

**This recommendation was made on 29 March 2017.**

## Action taken on previous recommendation

Informal staff monitoring and staff self-evaluation helped inform annual personal development meetings. We discussed introducing regular individual staff meetings to support staff develop their skills and knowledge.

The manager of the service undertook informal playroom observations. We discussed formalising these to identify areas for improvement and to show any progress made. Staff were aware of the documents Building the Ambition and How Good is Our Early Learning and childcare (HGIOELCC). Building the Ambition had been used to support some self-evaluation. These documents should now be fully used embedded in practice to support improvement. Staff should become familiar with the Health and Social Care Standards to support improved outcomes for children.

This recommendation had been met, however quality assurance systems should now be fully embedded in practice to support improvement to the service.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

## Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
29 Mar 2017	Unannounced	Care and support	3 - Adequate
		Environment	Not assessed
		Staffing	Not assessed
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
4 Dec 2013	Unannounced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good
2 Jun 2009	Announced	Care and support	5 - Very good
		Environment	5 - Very good
		Staffing	5 - Very good
		Management and leadership	5 - Very good

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