

Dysart Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Normand Road
Dysart
Kirkcaldy
KY1 2XW

Telephone: 01592 583 426

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
8 January 2025

Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
SP2004005267

Service no:
CS2003015885

About the service

Dysart Primary school nursery is a day care of children service registered to provide care service to a maximum of 50 children at any one time, age from two years to an age to attend primary school. The nursery consists of an indoor two to three room, an indoor three to five room and a dispersed outdoor service. Both rooms are situated on the school premises and have access to their own gardens. The dispersed service is a pilot outdoor nursery based within Ravenscraig Park in Kirkcaldy. The Bowling Pavilion offered an indoor space for children if needed. The outdoor nursery had identified several outdoor spaces that were used to give children a quality nursery experience.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 7 January 2025 between 09:00 and 16.15 and on 8 January between 09:00 and 17:00. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and information gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with 29 children and spoke with three of their family members. In addition, we took into account information submitted by four parents electronically
- spoke with 16 staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences and how they were supported with their play, learning, and routines
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Staff showed the utmost care and respect for children's unique contribution to the setting.
- Strong relationships with parents meant they knew their views were valued as they openly shared relevant information about their children.
- Children experienced being cared for in a consistent way and could communicate their emotional needs to staff in ways that suited them.
- Personal plans effectively captured each child's uniqueness in terms of preferences, interests and support needed to learn and grow.
- All the children benefitted from meaningful experiences and highly sensitive interactions as staff had a sound knowledge and understanding of child development.
- The senior leadership team had a clear vision for the nursery which aimed at building a strong community.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very 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?

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 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm interactions and responsive support from staff who consistently implemented the values and ethos of the service. They showed the utmost care and respect for children's unique contribution to the setting. The tone and manner of the interactions actively supported children's wellbeing, showing them that they mattered. Staff took time to help children settle in the morning. As a result, children benefitted from a strong sense of belonging. Close relationships with parents meant parents knew their views were valued as they openly shared relevant information about their children at drop off time. This approach ensured consistency for children between home and nursery.

Both the snack and the lunch time routines were a positive experience for children. They had developed life skills as they confidently cut fruit to eat, served themselves, and cleared away and washed dishes when finished. Staff naturally wove aspects of numeracy into the activity, while promoting conversations around children's interests and revisiting learning. They were also reviewing the lunch arrangements to make the experience more meaningful and enjoyable.

Staff worked very well together to meet the individual needs of children. A team approach meant that support was tailored to suit each child's needs. We saw several examples of this in the personal plans where staff identified and reviewed specific strategies and a summary of support. As a result of this inclusive ethos, children could communicate their emotional needs to staff in ways that suited them. Children experienced being cared for in a consistent way. In practice, this meant that staff confidently supported children offering gentle reassurance. For example, they helped a child settle by using sensory resources or through sign language.

Personal plans effectively captured each child's uniqueness in terms of preferences, interests and support needed to learn and grow. This was achieved as staff consulted with parents as well as other professionals and closely observed children at play. We talked with staff about the importance of using more evaluative language in their observations. This would help identify next steps for each child more effectively and meaningfully.

Peer review and effective communication across the three teams was evident. This meant that any significant change in the child's life was responded to in a sensitive and consistent way.

Staff managed allergies and food dietary requirements effectively. Systems for recording administration of medication and its storage were in place and mostly followed best practice. We identified that the way some items were stored could be improved. Staff responded very positively to our suggestions, recognising what would work best for the setting in line with best practice.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Staff valued play as a central aspect of their curriculum planning. We found there was a good balance between adult-led experiences and staff enriching and extending children's current interests. Planning

sheets, floor books, and reflections were used effectively to improve experiences, spaces, and interactions. By carefully reviewing the environment and the play resources available, staff offered fun opportunities to develop communication skills and numeracy awareness across the setting.

We saw children confidently lead their play and learning, as they could choose from a wide range of activities to meet their needs and interests. Indoors, these opportunities included helping staff to take the register, mark making with natural elements, playing with loose part, with building blocks or in the home corner. In the outdoor area adjacent to the playroom, these involved climbing outdoors, creating an obstacle course and making mud pies in the mud kitchen. As a result, children confidently led their learning. Staff were skilled at supporting children in their play. They knew when to join in to offer high quality learning experiences or let them experience play independently. This promoted children's imagination and creativity and made sure children's play was not unnecessarily disrupted. Staff showed an in-depth understanding of the impact of their approach in promoting children's learning, recognising the importance of tailoring their support, pausing, and working at the child's pace.

In the outdoor setting, the natural environment was very well used to support children's learning. The skilled interactions by staff enabled children to lead their play. Using real life experiences, they learned about seasons, the weather and wildlife. For example, the tide coming in was used to support literacy and numeracy. Children were made aware of the speed of waves, depth of water and about risk. This made learning fun as children learned to judge when to move to avoid getting wet. One child had drawn in the sand and said 'That's an octopus. It's got two eyes.'

All the children benefitted from meaningful experiences and highly sensitive interactions as staff had a sound knowledge and understanding of child development. This created a rich and inclusive environment for learning. For example, children confidently used sign language throughout the day to express their emotions. Their skill was valued as they had made videos for the families at home to practice the new signs.

Children benefitted from carefully planned links with the community such as visits to the local care home, trips to the shops and the library and regular time spent by the beach and in the woods.

Staff were tuned into children's emotional needs and situations that could affect them. They were sensitive to children's verbal and non-verbal cues. To support them to share how they were feeling, they had created a small feelings box. This enabled it to be readily available for children who could identify what they needed to feel better. This helped children understand their emotions and build resilience.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

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.

Staff had identified a range of outdoor spaces that provided children with stimulating areas to play. A positive approach to risk meant children learned how to keep safe outdoors. They were actively involved in checking the area for any hazard and agreeing a safe boundary. Real life experiences and natural resources offered children a breadth of experiences. For example, climbing trees helped their physical development as they learned about co-ordination and balance. Opportunities for mark making with sticks in the sand or dirt promoted literacy.

Using portable appliances such as a portable toilet and mobile hand wash unit, well established systems were in place to promote infection, prevention and control. We saw children confidently washing their hands at appropriate times.

The two to three room was very airy, light and welcoming, staff carefully thought-out nooks and specific areas to provide fun, challenge and enjoyment, while also taking into account the different stages of development. As a result, children settled quickly and confidently explored the environment.

The three to five room had some homely touches and areas which offered choice and reflected children's current interests. We discussed with staff the opportunity to review the quality of resources as the day goes by in popular areas of the playroom such as the home corner and the construction area. Children benefitted from free flow between indoors and outdoors moving confidently between the two. Staff monitored the room temperature to make sure that it would not get too cold inside.

The environment was generally safe with clear points of entrance and exit, which were monitored through a secure door entry system.

Staff adopted a risk/benefit approach, with children leading the risk assessments. They had recently linked the children's voices on their reflection on how to keep safe with SIMOA (safety, inspect, monitor, observe and act). As a result, children were empowered further to take calculated risks in a safe and positive way. Staff effectively reviewed accidents and incidents to identify areas that needed more attention as well as children who needed extra support.

The indoor environment was generally clean, with surfaces being clear of clutter. We highlighted the need to have attention to detail and maintain a high level of safety and cleanliness at all times. We also discussed the importance of reviewing the maintenance of furniture and fittings as some pieces of furniture showed signs of wear and tear. Maintaining a quality environment gives children a strong message that they matter and belong there. Children's confidential information and records were stored securely and managed well.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

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.

The senior leadership team had a clear vision for the nursery which aimed at building a strong community. All staff fully recognised the importance of establishing partnership working with families. This was enabled as the core values and aims were embedded in their practice. As a result, parents felt valued and were actively involved in the setting's initiatives. This truly created a positive learning community.

We found the consultation approach of the senior leadership team very creative and sensitive. This thought and effort increased the range of opportunities for parents to have their voice heard. In addition, the senior leadership team followed up where responses showed an area was not working well. This made sure they truly gathered and acted upon the parent's voice. For example, parents were encouraged to identify priorities and initiatives which mattered to them. One initiative was setting up a parent's group to support children with additional needs. A parent shared with us: 'We have been on a journey to understand and address our child's needs. The staff have been very supportive'. Through this transformative process, the senior leadership team empowered everyone to contribute to the work of the service.

High quality learning through play was clearly at the heart of the improvement plan. Staff skilfully involved parents in various sessions to support play in the home setting, making the most of everyday learning opportunities and sharing ideas. A parent told us: 'the Peep (Parents Early Education Partnership) sessions have been brilliant. I learnt that I don't need to buy expensive toys to engage my child in playing'. Another said: 'as a dad, I felt empowered'.

Quality assurance processes were meaningfully and effectively led at all levels. Through a systematic approach, all aspects of the service were monitored and reviewed. This meant that it became a reflective opportunity, which involved the whole team. Moving forward, leadership roles in specific areas could be explored further to maintain the high level of scrutiny and quality assurance.

National, local and best practice guidance was used to support practice. Staff also worked with practitioners from other settings to share practice. For example, the outdoor nursery was part of the network of outdoor nurseries. Being part of this wider community benefitted children as they shared information to provide quality experiences for them.

Staff were part of an initiative to improve children's vocabulary. They had measured children's progress and were able to share details about their journey. For example, they recognised what impacted on children's ability to learn. Plans were in place to share their findings with the wider learning community.

The leadership team used self-evaluation effectively to lead improvement and innovation in the setting. Changes were introduced at a pace that was right for staff, parents and children. Staff were encouraged to visit and consider practice at other settings to see what could work at Dysart. Staff shared with us that they felt very empowered and reflective after the visits. The process made them more aware of their strengths and their ability to lead and some members of staff told us they were taking the learning forward. They had identified how they would like to deepen their knowledge in certain aspects of child development. For example, undertaking sleep training to support parents more effectively.

Change was managed effectively as the senior leadership team understood the individual needs of staff. The nursery teacher and development officer worked alongside them, valuing their knowledge and expertise rather than imposing changes on them. This reflected the high expectations and aspirations the senior leadership team had for Dysart community. As a result, children, staff, and parents felt truly valued, listened to and recognised.

To enable an in-depth professional appraisal, the headteacher had devised a system that focussed on staff development and wellbeing. Practitioners were encouraged to review essential aspects of their role such as their workload, their personal development and their contribution to the team. This was to ensure that the working environment would effectively support their wellbeing and that there was a good life/work balance. Through this collaborative ethos, staff told us that they felt empowered to lead their professional learning and take ownership of their wellbeing: 'the headteacher supports my wellbeing by enabling and facilitating my professional learning and interests'. Another practitioner agreed: 'My needs, choices and concerns are always listened to'. Feeling valued and supported by the leadership team helped staff to meaningfully identify challenges, successes, achievements as well as new development goals, which in turn had a positive impact on children's experiences and outcomes and the overall development of the service.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

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.

There was a very good mix of skills, knowledge and experience among the staff team. Staff were focussed on professional learning, which they shared across the team. This was evident in their practice which promoted positive outcomes for children and their families. A member of staff told us: 'training has impacted our practice and validated what we do daily'.

There was a clear commitment by the three teams to share relevant information about the children's wellbeing and progress through professional dialogue. The team agreed with us that this could be strengthened further between the three to five room and the outdoor setting, for example in identifying the children's learning progress.

To promote continuity of care in the settings, the same supply staff would cover for the members of the team. Staff lunch breaks revolved around children's needs to cause minimal disruption. Team members communicated very well with each other at any point of change. Busier times were carefully planned to provide extra support. Between the two rooms staff worked together to help children's transitions and to allow non-contact time to undertake paperwork.

Effective communication by staff in the outdoor setting was supported by the use of walkie talkies. This enabled them to share information quickly and ensured any support needed was responded to when required. Their flexible approach meant children could explore the area as everyone knew what was happening.

We reviewed the induction procedures for the setting and asked the headteacher to consider formalising them further by identifying which elements of the 'Early learning and Childcare National Induction Resource' could be most relevant to staff. This would enable a clear process for mentoring new or supply staff. The headteacher was very responsive to this and had started implementing the change.

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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.