

Banchory Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Banchory Primary School
Arbeadie Road
Banchory
AB31 4EH

Telephone: 01330 823 368

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 March 2025

Service provided by:
Aberdeenshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000029

Service no:
CS2003016308

About the service

Banchory Primary School Nursery is provided by Aberdeenshire Council. The service operates from within the primary school and is close to local amenities such as shops and parks. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children aged two years to those not yet attending school with a maximum of 10 children aged two years.

Banchory Primary School Nursery operates from a building within the primary school grounds. The premises consist of an entrance area, two playrooms, and a sensory room. Children also have direct access to toilets, nappy changing areas, dining and kitchen facilities. The service has free-flow access to a large enclosed outdoor area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 March 2025 between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 and 21 March 2024 between the hours of 08:00 and 12:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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 intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with children during their play
- Received 15 parent/carer online questionnaires
- Received staff online questionnaires
- Spoke with staff and management
- Observed practice
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff were kind, caring and nurturing in their approach with children.
- Staff knew the children well and supported their individual needs.
- Staff had developed good relationships with parents who felt well informed and involved their child's experiences and learning.
- Staff were passionate about their role and were keen to extend their professional development to further improve outcomes for children.
- The setting should use their success criteria to evaluate improvements and consider the impact of these on outcomes for children and families. Parents and children would benefit from improvements being shared to support their understanding of developments.
- Management should review staff deployment at lunchtime and ensure staff have a clear understanding of their roles to support the safety and wellbeing of children.

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?	4 - 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?

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

Staff were very warm, gentle and caring in their approach. They were in tune with children and their needs, picking up on their cues and responding to children's requests. Reassurance and comfort was given when needed, contributing to positive attachments being formed. When speaking to staff it was clear that they knew the children very well, and were able to discuss likes/dislikes, personalities, sensitivities and how they were supporting them. Parents told us they had a strong connection with staff caring for their child. One parent said; "Very friendly and approachable. Feel like they all know my child very well." Another parent said "Staff are amazing, my [child] loves going and speaks about the staff regularly to me. I like [that they have] a different relationship with each individual one, [they are] extremely fond of [their] key worker." This allowed care, support and experiences to be tailored to children's individual needs which supported them to feel safe and secure.

Children's wellbeing and progress was very well supported through effective personal planning. Personal planning documents were individualised for each child and the wellbeing indicators captured individualised information and supported the children's progression. This ensured a holistic approach to care and allowed staff to effectively track progress in health and wellbeing. Support plans were in place for children who required them. This ensured that all staff were clear on any sensitivities and how these were being supported. Strategies were clear and we saw these being used effectively during inspection. This contributed to positive outcomes for children.

Children benefited from the system of rolling snacks and mealtimes which did not interrupt their play. Children sat and chatted with friends while being able to eat at their own pace. Consideration had been given to supporting independence and we saw children serve their own food and drinks and scrap their plates after lunch. Children ate food that was well presented, nutritious and took into account their preferences and dietary needs. At the time of our inspection, we saw adults being more task focussed rather than sitting and engaging with children. This resulted in some children not being effectively supported and supervised. This meant they didn't experience a relaxed and social mealtime. We raised this observation with management and advised them to review staff deployment and ensure staff have a clear understanding of their roles during snack and mealtimes. We heard that children liked to bake and cook, sometimes with food they'd grown at nursery. We saw children enjoying a baking activity as they made apple scones. This gave children the opportunity to develop life skills such as peeling, chopping and mixing. They also engaged in conversation, experienced positive interactions and were learning about food and good, healthy eating habits.

The setting's policy detailed how they would safely manage the administration of medication. Medication was stored safely in accordance with current best practice and was taken with them when outdoors. When auditing medication, the setting should now ensure medication forms are completed in full, to ensure all information is available to staff within each form, contributing to the children's health and wellbeing.

We saw that no children slept as part of their daily routine at the time of our inspection.

However, children's health and wellbeing had been considered by the availability of quiet, homely, comfortable spaces within the sensory room for the children to relax and rest if they needed to.

We did not observe a nappy change. There was however an appropriate policy was in place for staff to refer to. We saw staff approach children respectfully and the experience appeared to be a relaxed, nurturing experience for the children, with appropriate use of PPE (personal protective equipment) and appropriate changing facilities being used. This contributed to children's health and wellbeing.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were very happy and fully engaged in play throughout their day. A very good range of age-appropriate resources, including loose parts and open-ended resources were on offer, in both indoor and outdoor environments. We saw children pretend to toast marshmallows on a campfire with plastic shapes on the end of a stick. They spent time enjoying this experience with an adult modelling that the fire would be hot using sizzling noises and highlighted to them that they might burn their tongues on the marshmallows. Children problem solved as they used a wooden structure and a barrel outside to roll on, climb and jump. They worked together, supporting each other as they moved. This promoted children's curiosity and encouraged them to be creative, problem solve together, and use their imagination.

Staff extended children's learning through the use of open questions and directing children to resources. A group of children were engaged in play, sending cars down a drain pipe on a slope outdoors. They wanted the cars to go further and cross the puddle at the bottom. Staff used open questions such as "what could you use, let's have a look?" and "will they fit, shall we try?" to direct them to resources and encourage problem solving to extend their play. This highlighted that staff were genuinely interested in children's perspectives and thoughts and took time to broaden children's thinking processes.

A child-led approach to learning had been considered and implemented. Children were seen to be very independent and could choose where and what they played with. We could see lots of shelves and baskets available with a variety of resources to choose from. Children accessed these well, knew where to find them and moved them to support their play and learning. Areas were spontaneously extended, such as a space to play with cars and ramps was created and the craft table was made bigger to accommodate more children and resources. This supported the children's interests and experiences in the moment.

Language, literacy and numeracy experiences were very good and woven throughout the provision. Resources included environmental print, children's names on a hoop, symbols on the wall and labels on resources, all at children's level. Real resources such as old phones were used in children's play. We saw staff encouraging mathematical language and supporting language development throughout the inspection. For example, whilst playing bowls outside with rocks, staff encouraged children to keep score using a clipboard, paper and pencil. This progressed from writing numbers to keeping a tally score. Staff spontaneously sang with the children and read stories to them during play and in groups, both inside and outdoors. There was a variety of books and mark making materials available throughout the nursery environment and children moved these around to support their play. This supported the children's early language, literacy and numeracy development.

Staff explained their approach to planning and we could see that responsive and intentional planning had been taken into account. The setting had been focussing on tracking and monitoring children's progress to support and monitor development. This allowed staff to identify gaps and target challenge and support for individual children. Floor books were being used to capture children's voice and offer them ownership of their learning. These also allowed children to look back and reflect on their experiences which supported them to build on life skills, such as questioning, memory, investigating, and explaining.

Learning journals were used to share observations, photos and capture children's learning. This provided an opportunity for families to get an insight into their child's play and learning and allowed them to share home learning and experiences with the setting. We saw children were being given the opportunity to share this with staff and their peers which they enjoyed. Observations we sampled identified learning and were significant to individual children which allowed staff to track their progress and achievements. Staff were being supported to identify and plan meaningful next steps for children to ensure they were progressing well and were happy and confident.

Children had benefited from very good connections with the school and the wider community. They enjoyed 'Wilderness Wednesday's' outdoor in the garden with the primary one class. In groups the children regularly visited the local dementia club 'Forget Me Not'. This intergenerational connection allowed the children and older people to come together to share activities such as crafts, singing and reading books which they all enjoyed. The local Rotary club were going to be funding garden improvements and plan to work together with children and families on the developments. This contributed to children's sense of belonging and supported them to have new opportunities and learn out with the setting.

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 key question as very good.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The environment was very well maintained and secure with plenty of natural light and ventilation. Resources such as soft furnishing, materials, greenery and lighting had been added to soften the atmosphere within the rooms. These all helped create a very welcoming feel to the service. Children were observed to move around the spaces with confidence and had the opportunity to play indoors or outside most of the time. This supported children's choice on where they played.

Indoor spaces were set up thoughtfully using furniture to create areas for the children to explore. A very good variety of resources to support different play experiences were accessible to the children in both rooms, including creative, messy play, construction, loose parts, house corner and quieter, cosier areas.

Outdoors the children had access to a diverse outdoor space including a wooded area, small hills, and a paved area. There were planters for planting flowers and vegetables, digging areas, a variety of resources available in accessible sheds, structures to climb on, hammocks to relax in and shelters for the children to play inside. Children spent time playing games with rocks, climbing and jumping off a wooden structure, playing with cars and drain pipes, transporting water from the outdoor tap to the digging area, playing imaginative games and running through the woods. This supported them to be active and build confidence and resilience.

Infection control measures ensured a very clean and safe environment for children. We observed good hand washing being carried out by both staff and children at appropriate times. PPE was worn when required in line with best practice guidance, for example: during personal care and food preparation. This contributed to children being kept safe and well.

Systems were in place to help keep children safe. Robust risk assessments helped staff to mitigate risk and enhanced children's safety.

We suggested when reviewing the risk assessments consideration be given to benefits alongside risks to support risky play and resilience which we saw during the inspection. Children were being involved in developing their skills and awareness of staying safe through introducing the Care Inspectorates 'SIMOA' campaign and their wellbeing character 'Safe Sally'. There was a culture of talking about being safe and we heard both staff and children using this language. This supported the children's understanding of risk and keeping themselves safe. Accidents and incidents were documented well, and information was shared with parents. These were then audited and action taken if necessary. This contributed to the safety and wellbeing of staff and children.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The nursery's vision, values and aims were displayed in the cloakroom alongside the schools. These had been developed to include the views and ideas of staff, children and parents. This promoted a shared vision and values for the service, capturing what was important to all using the service and working there.

Children and families' views were greatly valued which supported the service's ongoing improvements. Learning journals, a closed Facebook page and information in the cloakroom were used to communicate with families. We saw that families were consulted through questionnaires and the regular sharing of learning through events and stay and play type sessions and seeking feedback following this. A family focus group had also been established. This involved a group of parents meeting regularly to be actively involved in the developments of the service. These were then able to shared with the wider parent body. The majority of parents told us they were involved in a meaningful way to develop the setting. One parent said; "Families are given a lot of opportunity to be involved in the nursery via the family focus group, volunteering with projects and open events. I do not always make it due to work commitments." Another parent said; "The nursery organise days regularly throughout the year to help tidy up the garden. We are very keen to be involved, unfortunately the timings haven't worked. The communication from the nursery is good about possible parent involvement." This ensured families were valued partners in ongoing improvements within the nursery.

Staff expressed that they felt well supported by management. Staff meetings, monitoring of practice and support and supervision meetings were in place which supported staff. We saw that this allowed staff to be involved in self-evaluation which enabled them to identify strengths and consider what could be improved to support improvement within the service. The setting had identified that more regular staff monitoring and one-to-one meetings would support staff to reflect deeper on their practice to bring about improved outcomes for children and families.

The setting had begun to document their improvement journey using a floor book. Engaging with recognised audit tools, such as the quality framework, had allowed them to recognise what they were doing well and identify areas for improvement. An action plan was used to support improvement and document developments. The setting should now use their success criteria to evaluate their improvements and consider whether there was a need for further development or if the outcome had influenced further improvements. Sharing this with families and children would support everyone to be clear about the setting's focus for improvement.

The setting was using a quality assurance calendar to support procedures, audits and monitoring within the nursery. We discussed evaluating and sharing the outcome of these with staff to ensure everyone was clear and aware of the impact.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question 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 warm and responsive in their approach. They joined in children's play and followed their interests. All staff knew the individual needs and interests of the children which allowed them to offer individualised support and care. We found the staff team to be very enthusiastic and motivated and our discussions highlighted that they were passionate about their role.

Children appeared happy and engaged in their play supported by staff who were observed to be taking a genuine interest in the children, having fun and chatting to them about what they were doing. When asked about positive aspects of their children's experience, one parent told us; "The variety of experiences on offer to the children. The environment always seems well thought out with an exciting and inventive selection of activities. Most importantly to me is how my child settled quickly due to some extremely responsive and nurturing relationships with staff. [They have] a very strong bond with a few of the staff and I feel [they are] valued and encouraged to be [their] true self at nursery." Another parent said; "The staff have worked consistently and compassionately with my [child] since [they] started there. [Their] confidence has increased a huge amount. [They] really struggled with social interactions when [they] started and now [they are] much more open to trying new things and engage with new people. It really has been a massive change." Staff had the time to support, speak and listen to children which contributed to them being settled and confident in the setting.

Staff communicated well, were flexible and moved around with children depending on their interests and needs. They respectfully asked each other for support and also offered help to colleagues. Staffing levels and deployment throughout the day mostly supported the wellbeing and safety of children using the service. However, at lunchtime we found the staff to be too task focussed, meaning children were not being well supported and supervised to benefit from a relaxed, social experience. We asked that management review staff deployment at lunchtime to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. **(See area for improvement 1)**

Staff were appropriately qualified, some working towards gaining further qualifications and had a good knowledge of child development. They were able to discuss how they had identified areas for development and were supporting children with their social skills, confidence, and speech. This meant that children were cared for by staff who had the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience.

Staff undertook regular training and were enthusiastic about continuing their professional development. They reflected on their practice and were able to discuss the impact training had on outcomes for children. For example, a staff member had completed training with the National Deaf Children's society. Following this, they considered how they could support children's understanding of communication and placed symbols around the setting at the children's level for them to access. This had been effective and children were using these to support communication. It was clear staff training was having an impact and was improving outcomes for children in the setting.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children are well supported and supervised and benefit from a relaxed, social mealtime, the manager and staff should be well planned to meet children's individual needs. This should include but not be limited to:

- a) Enough staff at mealtimes to effectively supervise and support children.
- b) Staff should be clear on their role to ensure staff are available to sit with children, promoting a relaxed, social mealtime.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'If I need help with eating and drinking, this is carried out in a dignified way and my personal preferences are respected' (HSCS 1.34).

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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - 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.