

# Happyhansel Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Happyhansel Primary School  
Walls  
Shetland  
ZE2 9PG

Telephone: 01595 807 450

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
17 September 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Shetland Islands Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002063

**Service no:**  
CS2003016127

## About the service

Happyhansel Primary School Nursery is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of 22 children aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school.

The nursery has designated rooms and outdoor area in the school in Walls, on the west coast of mainland Shetland. The accommodation comprises of one classroom with a kitchen area, cloak area and toilets. The designated outdoor area is accessed directly from the classroom. The nursery also shares the general purpose area/gym hall within the main school building and the outside play areas. There were four children present during the inspection.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 17 September 2025 between the times of 09:00 and 17:20. 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 and complaint information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with children using the service
- spoke to one parent/carer
- received four completed questionnaires from staff
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection, we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

## Key messages

- Children benefitted from nurturing and caring interactions from staff.
- Children were well settled and having fun.
- Children were cared for in an environment that was bright and welcoming.
- Quality assurance and improvement processes were leading to improved experiences for children.
- Staff worked well together to support children and meet their needs.

## 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?	4 - 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?

4 - Good

We evaluated different parts of this key question as good and very good, with an overall grade of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

### Quality Indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Children experienced gentle and nurturing interactions that promoted their confidence and wellbeing. Staff consistently offered reassurance, encouragement, and praise, which supported children to feel secure and proud of their achievements. These positive interactions enabled children to express their views and preferences, helping them feel listened to and respected.

Children's privacy and dignity were respected during personal care routines. Staff used discreet prompts to encourage children to use the toilet and wash their hands, promoting a calm and respectful environment. Children were given time and support to develop independence in personal care tasks such as handwashing and changing, which contributed to their confidence and self-help skills.

Mealtimes were relaxed, unhurried, and provided opportunities for social interaction. Staff sat with children, ensuring their safety and engaging them in conversations that supported the development of social and communication skills. Children were actively involved in preparing snacks and serving side dishes and drinks at lunchtime, which promoted independence and practical life skills.

Staff recognised the importance of rest and sleep in supporting children's overall wellbeing. While no children currently required sleep during nursery hours, appropriate provision was in place should this become necessary. The playroom was thoughtfully arranged to include quieter, cosier areas where children could choose to rest or relax, promoting a calm and responsive environment.

Staff gathered information from parents to develop personal plans that reflected children's needs, routines, preferences, and interests. All sampled plans included details on how children would be supported, although the level of detail varied. Ensuring consistency in the quality of recorded information will help promote continuity of care. Some plans contained outdated information about children's routines and preferences. While staff showed an up-to-date knowledge of these, recording the detail ensures accessibility for new or relief staff. During the inspection, staff shared plans to introduce a new format for personal plans, which will support regular reviews and improve the accuracy of recorded information.

Procedures were in place to support the safe administration of medication. A clear policy outlining these procedures was shared with parents, ensuring transparency and understanding of the process. Medical care plans were available and included most of the necessary information to guide staff in administering medication safely. During the inspection, we advised that the plans should be updated to include guidance on what to do if a child refuses or spits out medication, to further strengthen safe practice and ensure consistency.

Children's health and wellbeing were supported through effective links with other agencies involved in their care, including visiting professionals such as health visitors and the school nurse. These partnerships enabled consistent information sharing and a coordinated approach to meeting children's needs. Staff also established connections with local organisations, including visits to a toddler group and a care home. These experiences helped to broaden children's understanding of their community and supported them to feel

included, confident, and valued.

### Quality Indicator 1.3 – Play and learning

Children were having fun as they played and interacted with staff and each other. They had freedom to choose where and how to play, with staff supporting their experiences by providing additional resources and actively engaging in their play. While planned experiences were available, these were not well utilised during the visit. Staff should ensure that planned activities reflect children's current interests to maximise engagement and learning.

During the inspection, children showed sustained interest in mixing potions and "baking" cakes. Staff interactions during these activities supported the development of language, literacy, and numeracy skills. Discussions included concepts such as time, number, placement, and comparison to promote numeracy. Literacy was supported through the use of labelled items, environmental print, and recipe books introduced as part of the play.

Opportunities for mark making and reading were available across various areas of the nursery, including the role play and construction zones. These supported children's early literacy development in meaningful ways. However, resources to promote numeracy were less evident. To strengthen children's learning in this area, staff should ensure that items such as scales, measuring tools, and sorting materials are consistently visible and accessible within the environment.

Children's play experiences were enhanced through staff responsiveness to their cues and interests. Children were consulted about their preferences, and plans were adapted where appropriate to support engagement. Staff interactions facilitated play and extended learning by encouraging children to think critically and problem solve. However, at times, there was a lack of challenge for children in the resources and activities offered. Staff should consider whether resources and activities accessed independently by children offer sufficient challenge to support their ongoing development.

Observations of children's experiences and achievements were recorded in individual learning journals, which were accessible to parents/carers and formally shared during twice-yearly parent evenings. Staff also engaged in daily conversations with parents/carers at collection times, helping them to celebrate their child's successes and remain involved in their learning.

Staff were able to confidently discuss children's learning and progress. A system was in place to record and track children's progression and achievements within curriculum areas. Next steps had been identified for some children. However, it was unclear how children's progression towards these goals was being followed up. Staff should consider how best to record this to ensure that agreed strategies are consistently supporting children's achievements.

## How good is our setting?

**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 2.2 – Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a bright, inviting environment that supported their wellbeing. The playroom was comfortably furnished to a high standard, with soft furnishings such as rugs, cushions, and a sofa creating cosy, homely spaces. There was ample room for children to move freely and store personal belongings, helping children and families feel valued.

Resources and spaces were developmentally appropriate, promoting children's safety and independence. The room was arranged into zones, with most resources easily accessible to children, encouraging self-directed play. Some shelving was cluttered, making it difficult for children to see available materials. Staff had identified this and shared plans to improve organisation.

Children had independent access to a small outdoor area directly from the playroom. This space was well used, and staff were considering ways to further develop it to support literacy and numeracy. Outdoor play was extended through access to a large, grassed area and a playground, offering opportunities for energetic play and supporting physical development.

Risk assessments were in place to promote children's safety, detailing identified hazards and actions to minimise risk. Staff were in the process of reviewing these to ensure they remained current and relevant. During the inspection, we asked that the concrete tunnels in the grassed area be included in the written risk assessment to ensure their use is monitored and reviewed.

Staff supported children to consider their own safety through everyday interactions, such as discussing wet floors or safe movement around the environment. Involving children in risk assessments and safety checks would further develop their awareness and ability to manage risk.

Children's and families' privacy was protected through the secure storage of personal information, including password protection for digital files.

## 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 service's vision, values, and aims (VVA) were shared with parents and other stakeholders, raising awareness of the nursery's priorities in meeting children's needs and supporting their aspirations. The VVA were embedded across the wider school community, fostering a sense of inclusion and shared purpose.

Parents/carers and staff reported feeling comfortable providing feedback and making suggestions. They felt listened to and included in the development of the service. Opportunities for parental feedback included informal conversations at handover times, surveys, and voting activities. Children were also consulted through discussions and voting, and staff were working to develop more consistent ways to capture children's voices to inform service evaluation.

Staff demonstrated reflective practice, drawing on best practice guidance, feedback from professionals, and regular team meetings. Quality assurance processes such as audits and monitoring of practice were used to inform evaluation and identify areas for improvement. This had led to identification of areas where change could impact positively on children's experiences. These included enhancing outdoor literacy and numeracy, increasing challenge for children, and strengthening parental engagement.

The manager and staff spoke confidently about planned changes and had developed an action list. Development meetings were scheduled to incorporate these into an improvement plan. To support successful implementation, the improvement plan should include defined timescales, allocated

responsibilities, and measurable success criteria. This will support continuous improvement and enable the service to evaluate the impact on children's experiences and outcomes.

## 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

Children's overall wellbeing was supported by sufficient staffing levels, which enabled staff to meet individual needs and promote positive experiences. Children were cared for by a motivated and nurturing team, with a mix of skills and experience contributing to positive experiences throughout the day.

Management recognised the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed to support the wellbeing of children. Where possible, staff absences were covered by staff within the setting. Arrangements were in place to promote continuity of care across the day and ensure positive transitions and communications with families. Busier times of the day, such as mealtimes or arrival and departure times were recognised and planned for.

Staff communicated effectively, sharing information to support children's needs and coordinating responsibilities when required. Their respectful interactions and collaborative approach created a positive atmosphere, helping children feel safe and secure. While the team worked well together, recent staff changes meant they were still developing an understanding of each other's strengths and interests. Time should be given to support this process and ensure these strengths are consistently used to enhance children's experiences.

Children's safety was promoted through staff's understanding of their responsibilities in identifying, recording, and reporting safeguarding concerns. Staff had attended child protection training, and a clear policy was in place to guide practice.

Staff spoke positively about the training they had completed and its impact on their work. A structured induction process supported new staff to feel welcomed and confident in their roles. Opportunities to share ideas and reflect on practice helped staff build confidence and contribute to positive experiences for children.

## 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).

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - 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](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto: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.