

Woodside School Nursery Day Care of Children

Woodside Primary School
Clifton Road
Aberdeen
AB24 4EA

Telephone: 01224 454900

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 November 2025

Service provided by:
Aberdeen City Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000349

Service no:
CS2003014527

About the service

Woodside School Nursery provides a day care of children service to a maximum of 80 children not yet attending primary school. No more than five are aged two years to under three years.

The nursery is situated within a designated building within Woodside Primary School. An entrance area has a secured door and welcome area. The playrooms provide spacious areas with both having direct access to an enclosed outdoor play space. The nursery is located in Aberdeen and has access to local amenities such as shops and parks.

Up to 45 children were present during the inspection.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10 November 2025 between 08:40 and 16:45 and 11 November 2025 between 08:00 and 13:00. 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 intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with children using the service
- spoke with six of their parents/carers
- received four responses to our request for feedback from parents and staff
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

During this inspection we 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

- 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 families who felt welcomed into the setting.
- Transitions should be reviewed to ensure children are supported in order to meet their care and learning needs.
- The setting should consider adopting a slower-paced pedagogy and reviewing the overall flow of the day to support uninterrupted play.
- Robust quality assurance processes involved everyone and lead to continuous improvement.

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

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

Leadership 5 - Very Good

Leadership and management of staff and resources

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

The nursery's values, vision, and aims had recently been updated to align with the school. Children and families were actively involved in this process, with opportunities to share their views and contribute ideas. This inclusive approach ensured that everyone felt involved and represented. The updated values were clearly reflected in practice, and sharing them with families helped set clear expectations about the service. This transparency strengthened trust and supported a shared understanding of the nursery's commitment to high-quality care and learning.

Since the last inspection, staff reported feeling very well supported at all levels. They spoke positively about the nurturing approach, which they felt started with leadership and extended throughout the team. Protected time, such as staff meetings, promoted effective communication, involvement in improvement initiatives, and opportunities for reflection. The use of an improvement floor book encouraged collaborative discussion and critical evaluation with staff and child voice clearly evident. Staff valued this method of communication alongside room communication books. Leadership meetings provided a platform to review previous actions, monitor ongoing developments, and plan further improvements. The team also engaged with the new Quality Improvement Framework to reflect on practice against best-practice guidance. For example, they reviewed the school's vision, values, and aims, made changes, and implemented these, as evidenced on the display board. These approaches demonstrated a strong culture of collaboration and continuous improvement, with clear systems in place to support staff development and enhanced outcomes for children.

Parents told us they were involved in a meaningful way in the development of the setting. One parent said, "The staff have provided a wishing tree, which my [child] and I look at most weeks. [They] will choose something to add on to our weekly shop." Another parent shared, "The teachers involve us and inform us of new developments". There were opportunities for families to contribute ideas and stay informed about changes. Feedback from parents indicated they feel valued and included, which strengthened partnerships and promoted a shared approach to improvement.

Robust quality assurance systems, including audits and moderation, were in place and effectively supported improvement. For example, the quality assurance calendar was simple yet highly effective. Using colour coding to clarify roles and responsibilities and hyperlinks to relevant documents such as monitoring records and audits. Shared leadership roles empowered staff to lead developments. Observations of staff interactions, carried out by management using a "two stars and a wish" approach, had led to improvements. For instance, changes to lunchtime practice were implemented following feedback from an audit carried out by the early years team, resulting in staff sitting with children. Audit tools such as ITERS and ECERS (early childhood environment rating scale) were used to monitor and enhance the environment, with all staff getting involved. Accident and incident audits identified trends and informed actions, such as slowing down on bikes and staff using appropriate language.

Leadership meetings and regular supervision promoted reflection and follow-up on actions, with evidence of impact. For example, staff accessing training to build confidence in supporting children with additional needs. Progress was documented through tools such as PowerPoint and e-books, ensuring transparency and staff involvement. These systematic and collaborative approaches demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement, with clear evidence of impact on practice and outcomes for children.

Management and staff were passionate about play-based learning, and this was central to improvement planning. Positive changes had already impacted on outcomes for children. Reflecting on and evaluating these developments, to measure impact and guide future planning, will further support continuous improvement.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Playing, learning and developing

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Management demonstrated a strong understanding of child development and learning, which they actively and enthusiastically shared with staff. This approach supported staff to develop a good understanding of these principles. For example, management introduced tracking tools that enabled staff to monitor children's learning and progression effectively. These systems supported the planning of play experiences and helped engage children in meaningful ways.

Children were generally encouraged to lead their own play, with time and space to explore their interests. They had opportunities to be curious, creative, and problem-solve both indoors and outdoors. For example, outdoors, children engaged in climbing, balancing, and jumping from loose parts into a large muddy puddle. They carefully balanced along a plank, experimenting with different methods, and enjoyed the cause-and-effect experience of splashing into the puddle. Indoors, other children participated in imaginative play in the hairdressing area, re-enacting real-life experiences as they styled the hair of staff and peers. These examples demonstrated that children were motivated and engaged in play. During the inspection there were interruptions to children's play, for example gathering together before opening the door to outdoor play. We recommended that the setting consider adopting a slower-paced pedagogy and review the overall flow of the day to support uninterrupted play, ensuring children can make the most of their full session at nursery.

Language, literacy, and numeracy were naturally embedded within play experiences. Children engaged in songs and storytelling both spontaneously and in small groups. Books were available throughout the environment, including outdoors, supporting a love of reading. Children enjoyed mark-making activities, such as using clipboards and pencils to enhance their play. Environmental print was evident, with real packaging in the home corner and resources clearly labelled for children. Staff encouraged children to talk about and label their artwork, promoting language development. Children also explored early numeracy concepts, for example, using cardboard tubes to measure their height. These experiences demonstrated that children were developing early language, literacy, and numeracy skills in meaningful, play-based contexts.

Parents told us the children were involved in a range of opportunities and fun experiences, including outdoor play, to meet their needs and support their development. One parent shared, "Recently [they have] been enjoying being a helper to prepare snack, carry out risk assessments and support peers. This has helped [them] now that some of [their] friends are at school". Another parent said, "One standout initiative was the creation of the 'Friendship Bench' in the nursery garden. After reading 'The Friendship Bench' story, the children helped decorate the bench, making it bright and welcoming. This gave them a sense of ownership and pride. The bench is now used not only as a space for children who feel sad or lonely, but also as a place to sit and chat with friends".

Most staff demonstrated active involvement in children's play, showing genuine interest and listening attentively. They effectively used strategies such as modelling, commenting, and questioning to extend children's thinking. For example, during outdoor painting activities, staff enriched the experience by using descriptive language and commenting on the children's actions, which supported their understanding of colour mixing in different ways. Similarly, when children were jumping into a muddy puddle, a staff member enhanced the activity by turning it into a fun game, which the children responded to enthusiastically. Staff were also skilled at recognising and celebrating achievements through positive reinforcement, including clapping and verbal praise. However, on occasion, some staff appeared to adopt a more supervisory role rather than actively interacting or enhancing play experiences. We have asked the setting to consider this when monitoring staff practice to ensure consistency in the quality of interactions with children.

Children were at the heart of planning, with a well-balanced approach that combined intentional and responsive experiences. These were documented effectively, including through the use of a floor book. Recent staff training had strengthened consideration of the child's voice, which was reflected in planning within the floor book. This approach gave children greater ownership of their learning and ensured activities were responsive to their interests. Improving consistency in observations would further support the identification of progress and achievements, helping children develop a broad range of skills for life and learning. Management had already recognised this and had plans in place to deliver training aimed at enhancing the quality of observations. Robust tracking systems were in place to help children reach their full potential. These systems ensured that children were both challenged and supported in their play and learning. Management implemented this in a collaborative and supportive way, involving staff and building their knowledge and understanding.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children benefited from an environment where nurturing relationships supported their growth and development. They received warm, responsive care that promoted their wellbeing. For example, on arrival, children were excited to see staff and often approached them for cuddles. Transitions at the start of sessions were supported by welcoming parents into the setting, allowing them to drop off children, select lunches together, and stay to settle their child if needed. Individual strategies were also used, such as showing children their bag when it was time to get changed. However, some transitions were less supportive. At times, staff were task-focused before lunchtime. For example, staff were in the kitchen, which meant children's needs were not consistently met. We discussed the importance of reviewing transition practices, particularly around mealtimes, to ensure children's needs are met consistently throughout the day. (See area for improvement 1)

Since the previous inspection, improvements had been made to mealtimes. Staff acted on feedback from observations, resulting in a more positive experience for children. Mealtimes now provided opportunities to promote independence and learning, with children actively involved in tasks such as setting up for lunch, serving food, and scraping plates. Most staff sat with children at their level during meals, and some ate alongside them, fostering supervision, social interaction, and language development. Children who took longer to eat continued to receive appropriate support, ensuring mealtimes remained unhurried, relaxed, and sociable. Meals were nutritious, culturally appropriate, and adapted to meet allergies and individual preferences, making mealtimes both enjoyable and safe.

Children's wellbeing was effectively supported through personal planning that identified their strengths, interests, and individual needs. Staff collaborated closely with children, families, and other professionals to maintain and promote wellbeing. The use of the wellbeing indicators provided a holistic overview, enabling staff to plan care and support. We discussed the importance of ensuring that all strategies used to support children were clearly documented within support plans so they could be implemented consistently and meet each child's individual needs.

Staff demonstrated strong relationships with children and families, creating a warm and welcoming environment. For example, at drop-off and pick-up times, staff were available to greet families and engage in meaningful conversations. The setting promoted cultural sensitivity and inclusivity within the nursery entrance featuring multilingual welcome signs, a world map displaying staff and children's origins, and a celebrations display. To strengthen connections with parents, the setting had prioritised family engagement as part of their improvement plan and trialled various approaches. For instance, formal face-to-face meetings with key workers were offered. Although uptake was limited, families who participated found these meetings highly beneficial, enabling the setting to learn from parents and respond effectively to children's individual needs.

Most parents spoke positively about their engagement with the setting. One parent said, "I have positive relationships with the staff, they are approachable and know my daughter well". Another parent shared, "One of the most positive aspects of my child's experience in the nursery is the nurturing and inclusive environment created by the staff. [They feel] safe, loved, and encouraged to explore and learn through play".

Areas for improvement

1. To support children's health and well-being, the provider and manager should ensure transitions are consistent and supportive throughout the day, including during busy times such as the lead up to mealtimes, in order to meet children's care and learning needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'People have time to support and care for me and to speak with me' (HSCS 3.16).

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 health, well-being and safety, the provider and manager should ensure staff are appropriately deployed and have the time needed in order to meet children's care and learning needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: My needs are met by the right number of people (HSCS 3.15) and People have time to support and care for me and to speak with me. (HSC 3.16).

This area for improvement was made on 4 December 2023.

Action taken since then

Some transitions were unsupportive. At times, staff were task-focused which meant children's needs were not consistently met. The setting should review transition practices, to ensure children's needs are met consistently throughout the day.

This area for improvement has not been fully met and has been rewritten to address outstanding issues under quality indicator, nurturing care and support.

Previous area for improvement 2

To promote children's understanding and enjoyment of healthy eating and drinking, the manager and staff should improve mealtime experiences. This should include but not be limited to ensuring the environment is calm and relaxed with comfortable seating and table arrangements.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible. (HSCS 1.35).

This area for improvement was made on 4 December 2023.

Action taken since then

Improvements had been made to mealtimes resulting in a positive experience for children. Mealtimes took place in rooms, allowing children to sit comfortably. Most staff sat with children at their level during meals, and some ate alongside them, fostering supervision, social interaction, and language development. Children who took longer to eat continued to receive appropriate support, ensuring mealtimes remained unhurried, relaxed, and sociable.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support children's learning and development, the manager and staff should ensure children experience high quality play and learning relevant to their age and stage of development. This should include but not be limited to ensuring:

- staff are knowledgeable and trained in supporting children's learning
- the learning environment sparks children's curiosity
- group times are used effectively to support all children's needs.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation, and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling' (HSCS 1.30).

This area for improvement was made on 4 December 2023.

Action taken since then

Management demonstrated a strong understanding of child development and learning, which they actively and enthusiastically shared with staff. This approach supported staff to develop a good understanding of these principles. Children had opportunities to be curious, creative, and problem-solve both indoors and outdoors. Play observed demonstrated that children were motivated and engaged in experiences.

This area for improvement has been 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

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	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 ਵਿਚ 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.