

Thrive Childcare and Education, Corner House Nursery Banchory Day Care of Children

56 Station Road
Banchory
AB31 5YJ

Telephone: 01330 824 744

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 November 2025

Service provided by:
Celtic Cross Nursery School Limited

Service provider number:
SP2003000377

Service no:
CS2004078050

About the service

Thrive Childcare and Education, Corner House Nursery Banchory is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 54 children aged from birth to those not yet attending primary school. The individual playrooms have a maximum number and age range namely:

- a) a maximum of 9 children under the age of 2 years shall be accommodated in the baby room at any one time
- b) a maximum of 17 children between the ages of 18 months and 3 years shall be accommodated in the downstairs playroom
- c) a maximum of 28 children between the ages of 3 years to those not yet attending primary school shall be accommodated in the upstairs playroom.

Care is provided from a two storey detached property located within the town of Banchory in Aberdeenshire. The service is conveniently located at the centre of the town, close to parks, shops and other amenities.

Children are accommodated over two floors. The oldest children are cared for on the upper level of the premises, and the younger children are accommodated on the ground floor. All children have access to a variety of secure gardens surrounding the premises.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 4 November 2025 between 09:15 and 17:00 and 5 November 2025 between 08:40 and 12:15. 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 throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with children using the service
- spoke with three of their parents/carers
- received 14 completed questionnaires from families
- received seven completed questionnaires from staff
- spoke with staff and management
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- 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

- Children were happy, confident and having fun.
- Management and staff were committed to the continued development of the service to improve outcomes for children.
- Children experienced nurturing, warm and caring interactions from staff who knew them well.
- Planning for children's learning was being developed. Staff were being supported to develop skills and confidence in this area.
- Management and staff should continue to develop and embed self-evaluation and quality assurance systems which inform the service improvement plan.
- Families were welcomed into the setting and staff were considering further ways to meaningfully involve parents/carers in children's experiences.

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	4 - 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 4 - Good**Leadership and management of staff and resources**

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.

The service had vision, values and aims which reflected the wider provider group and supported staff and families to understand what to expect from the service. Management demonstrated a clear and purposeful vision for the setting which was reflected in the positive and enthusiastic attitudes of staff. The service was consulting with families to develop specific vision, values and aims tailored to the setting which would further support staff in meeting the needs of children and families. This helped families to feel connected and involved in shaping the service.

Positive experiences for children were supported by a realistic, relevant and achievable improvement plan. The action plan of key priorities included the environment and personal planning. An improvement floor book provided a visual and assessable way of showing the improvements that had been made. These included improvements to the environment and children's sensory experiences. A positive ethos helped to ensure that staff were working towards the same goals and progress was seen to be contributing to improved outcomes for children.

A quality assurance and monitoring calendar had recently been implemented to support ongoing service development. Regular audits were completed and included, the environment, personal plans, medication and mealtimes. These helped to identify what was working well and areas for development to support improvement of the service. Management understood the importance of leading the pace of change thoughtfully. Staff felt listened to, resulting in a proactive, solution-focused team, committed to improving outcomes.

Staff told us how the manager provided a clear focus for their shared team work and they had begun to work together to evaluate and reflect on their practice. Regular team meetings supported shared understanding and promoted consistency, with staff reporting improved communication. Management advised plans were in place to introduce more formal individual support meetings. This would further support staff wellbeing and areas for development.

Management valued staff's contributions and were keen to distribute leadership roles. Staff were taking on further responsibilities such as developing the environment. This contributed to staff feeling valued and empowered to contribute to improvements.

Children's wellbeing was supported through safe recruitment and an effective staff induction which aligned with the Scottish Government Early Learning and Childcare: National Induction Resource. This helped new staff to settle into their role and become part of the staff team. All staff were registered with the appropriate regulatory bodies and engaged in ongoing professional learning to ensure their practice was informed by current theory, practice, and national guidance.

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.

Children were happy and having fun. They confidently explored the play spaces as they participated in a variety of experiences which were developmentally appropriate and relevant to their interests. As a result, children were developing their confidence, independence and creativity.

Play spaces had recently been developed to spark children's curiosity and encourage exploration. Overall, children benefited from spaces that captured their imagination. This included making playdough, painting, playing games and cooking in the role play areas. A child told us, "I make toast and a cake". The manager and staff spoke enthusiastically about further developing the outdoor area and resources on offer. A parent commented, "My child gets to do a range of things". Another parent shared, "My child has had so many existing skills reinforced and new skills learnt through their experiences". This supported children's wellbeing and development.

Staff played alongside children, supporting them in their play. They praised children's achievements, made play suggestions and helped them find resources they needed. Younger children's cues for interactions were extended through songs, movement and storytelling. Staff participated in older children's games and encouraged children to take turns and make predictions when exploring sensory play and being active outdoors. Some staff used effective questioning and commentary to extend and develop children's individual learning. However, there were a few missed opportunities to extend children's thinking. Staff should continue to develop questioning to extend learning and enable all children to widen their skills through play.

There were opportunities available for children to develop their language, literacy and numeracy skills. Storytelling and singing took place individually and in small groups throughout the day. A variety of mark making tools supported children's emerging writing skills. The use of environmental print, such as packaging and signs, provided opportunities for children to recognise and become familiar with letters. Some mathematical language was used as children and staff played games, counted and measured. As a result, children were supported to develop key language, literacy and numeracy skills through their play experiences.

Children's interests were captured and provided for as a new planning system was responsive to their needs. Staff told us the process was "clearer and more manageable". Children's experiences were documented in floor books, capturing their voices and observations of children's learning were shared with parents using an online app. However, observations and learning reviews did not yet consistently hold enough information to fully support all children in identifying their interests and learning needs. Next steps were not yet consistently logged to progress children's learning. This was recognised within the service improvement plan. Management were supporting staff to build knowledge and skills in delivering child-led, high-quality learning.

Children's health was supported by access to outdoor areas where they enjoyed more active play. Children had fun collecting leaves, exploring puddles, climbing and riding scooters and bikes. However, time outdoors was initiated by staff rather than individual children. Further consideration should be given to making the garden areas more accessible to children throughout the day. Aiming, where possible, for children to be able to independently choose to play indoors or outdoors.

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 experienced nurturing, warm and caring interactions from staff who knew them well and showed a genuine interest in their wellbeing. Staff were responsive to children's cues and requests and offered praise, encouragement and reassurance when needed. Staff sat alongside children during play, providing closeness, cuddles and affection. This contributed to positive attachments and children feeling safe and secure. A child commented, "The ladies keep me safe". A parent shared: "My child has made a good connection with adults in their room and nice to have consistent staff members who know them well."

All children had a personal plan in place. These held information provided by families to promote staff's knowledge and understanding of children's individual needs. We found that some plans had limited information and had not been consistently reviewed with families. This had the potential to compromise children's care, play and learning. Management advised this had been identified as an improvement priority and work was being carried out to promote a more consistent approach.

Overall, children enjoyed snack and mealtimes which were relaxed and unhurried. Younger children were sensitively supported with self-help skills. A rolling lunch was available for older children which promoted children's choice and independence as they chose where to sit, served themselves and poured their own drinks. Staff sat with children at these times, helping to promote a safe, sociable experience.

Transitions between experiences during the day were generally positive. There were times when these could have been quicker to reduce children waiting and promote their engagement. For example, when getting ready to go outside children were supported to be independent and dress themselves appropriately. However, at times, children had to wait until everyone was ready. This meant some children were kept waiting and became restless. We suggested leaders undertake more quality assurance in this area of practice to enhance children's experience further.

Children were well supported during personal care routines. Nappy changing was carried out respectfully as children were asked first and given reassurance throughout the process. This helped children feel supported and cared for. Management told us they had a plan to improve ventilation within the nappy changing facilities. This would contribute to a more comfortable and hygienic environment, further promoting children's dignity and wellbeing during personal care.

Families were warmly welcomed into the service, helping to build positive relationships. A parent described staff as "open, caring, warm and they all care for the children". Another parent shared: "The nursery is small and very much like a family." Communication strategies, including daily chats, newsletters, online updates, and noticeboard information, supported communication, trust and connection. Some parents told us they would like more opportunities to be involved in developing the service. A parent commented: "We don't have too much involvement beyond the day-to-day comings and goings. Happy to learn how we could become more involved." We discussed this with the manager who shared plans to strengthen family involvement such as through parent partnership meetings and open days. Involving families in shaping future events would contribute to supporting stronger relationships and reduce barriers to involvement.

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	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - 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 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.