

# Aviemore Early Learning and Childcare Service Day Care of Children

Aviemore Primary School  
Muirton  
Aviemore  
PH22 1SF

Telephone: 01479 813 120

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
11 November 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Highland Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003001693

**Service no:**  
CS2017358208

## About the service

Aviemore Early Learning and Childcare Service provides a daycare of children service in Aviemore. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 80 children aged 3 to 12 years.

The setting consists of two playrooms, a large outdoor play space, reception and cloakroom areas and toilet facilities. The nursery also has access to the school gym hall.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10 and 11 November 2025 between 08:15 and 15:30. Feedback was shared with the service on 11 November 2025.

The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with 21 children using the service
- received seven completed questionnaires from families
- spoke with seven staff and the management team
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- 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

- Families were welcomed into the service daily and had the opportunity to speak to staff.
- Staff knew children well and were responsive to their needs.
- Children were engaged in their play and learning and staff were responsive to children's current interests.
- Books were used effectively to support children to self-regulate and express their feelings and emotions.
- Independence and life skills were developed throughout mealtimes.
- The service had developed their approach to quality assurance and self-evaluation to support ongoing 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	4 - Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	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

### Quality Indicator - 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 a vision, values and aims in place which had been reviewed by staff, children, and families. These reflected the aspirations of children and their families, for example, children's rights were respected and children and families felt valued through recognition of their success. A parent shared, 'we are often asked for feedback.' The service were working to fully embed these into practice.

A shared improvement plan was in place for the school and nursery. The previous Care Inspectorate report had been used to support the service to identify key priorities to support ongoing improvement, professional development and improve outcomes for children.

A quality assurance calendar had been created which highlighted key tasks to be completed throughout the year. These included the reviews of personal plans and audits of medication, accidents and incidents. The service should continue to embed quality assurance processes into practice to sustain a culture of continuous improvement.

Regular self-evaluation, monitoring, and supervision processes led to the creation and review of action plans which identified and recorded progress and impact. This approach had supported staff to become more reflective on their practice, learning environments and play experiences for children. The leadership team had identified the importance of staff wellbeing and were supporting them to reignite their passion and motivation. A staff member shared, 'we have regular meetings where everyone's opinion is valued.' This had a positive impact on staff and improved outcomes for all.

Induction checklists were in place which supported newly recruited staff members into the service. We discussed how this process could be developed further by incorporating reflective questions from the Early Learning and Childcare - National Induction Resource. This would support and develop staff confidence and provide them with a greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

**Quality Indicator – Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment**

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.

Staff were passionate about developing their knowledge, skills, and practice through a range of training opportunities. Staff shared how they reflected on their training and discussed how it improved their practice and play experiences for children. Staff skills and knowledge could be further developed through the ongoing development of targeted training. This would support individual staff training needs and professional development.

There was a mix of skills, knowledge, and experience within the staff team. Most staff were skilled at ensuring children were challenged during their play and learning. This was supported through effective questioning, introducing further resources and encouraging children to develop critical thinking skills. These opportunities supported progression and achievement for children.

Staffing was consistent within both nursery rooms which provided continuity of care for children and their families. Staff deployment was well managed throughout the day and over busier periods of the day including lunch time. Staffing levels had been well considered to ensure children's needs were consistently met and there was no impact on their play and learning experiences.

Staff communicated effectively with their colleagues during movement between indoors and outdoors or to share information relating to a specific child. Regular head counts took place and staff were aware of how many children were outdoors at all times. Staff positioned themselves appropriately while outdoors which maintained a high level of supervision of children during their play. This ensured children were cared for in a safe and secure environment.

## Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 4 - Good

### Quality Indicator - Children experience high quality spaces

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.

A warm and welcoming environment was provided for children and families. Children had their own individual coat pegs, trays, and mailboxes. Photographs of family members were displayed along with children's artwork. This ethos shared the message that children mattered and were valued and respected.

The environment was safe, secure, and well maintained. The security of the main doors into nursery had been enhanced. Doors were accessed using key fobs and staff manned the main doors during pick up and drop off times to keep children safe. A parent commented, 'it feels very safe and supervised.' The outdoor play space was safe and secure which ensured children were kept safe during free flow access to the outdoors.

Detailed risk assessments were in place to support the staff team to provide safe environments for children and families. These were reviewed and updated each term or more frequently if required. Staff were knowledgeable about SIMOA (Keeping children safe - look, think, act campaign) which further enhanced their ability to identify and manage risks proactively, ensuring children's safety and wellbeing.

Effective infection control practices were in place and were well managed. This minimised the risk of spread of infection. Children's privacy and dignity was respected and maintained during personal care.

Children visited a local woodland area every week. Staff spoke about how they had supported and developed children's woodland learning experiences through taking part in outdoor training to enhance their knowledge and skills. A parent shared, 'They have free flow to the outdoors area and have outdoor woods play once a week.' These opportunities provided depth to children's learning through exploring, being curious, developing imaginations and problem solving.

The child's voice was evident within the service and children were regularly consulted, for example, through making snack and menu choices for the week ahead. Staff had recognised that the outdoor space needed to be developed due to recent changes made within the environment by the local authority. Staff were planning to consult and involve children in the redevelopment of their outdoor play space. This would provide children with a sense of ownership and empowerment and would support staff to meet children's needs during the redevelopment of this space.

## Children play and learn 4 - Good

### Quality Indicator - 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.

Most children were engaged in quality play and learning experiences. Children were excited and having fun while designing and creating a broomstick. This play experience incorporated science, mathematics, engineering, numeracy, and literacy. Children took part in a wide variety of play and learning experiences including creative play, story sharing, active play, and construction. These opportunities supported children to explore, be curious and develop imaginations and problem-solving skills.

Children were keen to share their learning with us, for example, children had been involved in creating a wall display which reflected a current interest in the 'Room on the Broom' story book. Children spoke with confidence and revisited previous learning by looking at photographs and sharing their learning. This promoted creativity, ownership, and a sense of pride in their achievements.

Language, literacy, and numeracy was embedded within the indoor environment. Children identified their names, took part in mark making and used real life resources to measure, tell the time, and weigh objects. Makaton was used to support communication skills. Visual timetables supported children to understand the routines of the day and what was happening next. Books were used effectively to support children to express feelings and emotions and to self-regulate if needed. The service would benefit from developing language, literacy, and numeracy outdoors to enhance the outdoor space and support children to have opportunities to develop these skills within all environments.

Planning was recorded on whiteboards in the rooms and then transferred into a folder at the end of the planning cycle. Planning was colour coded to highlight children's interests and adult initiated learning. Staff evaluated the planning and clearly identified the impact on children's learning and development.

Observations were recorded in children's learning journals. A parent commented, 'nursery provide multiple opportunities to have us in and see our child in her setting and look through her learning journey.' Some observations could be developed to show children's specific learning rather than sharing a summary of their play. Some next steps were recorded within the journals, and these were reviewed to highlight progression and achievements. Tracking and monitoring of children's learning was carried out termly. The frequency of this is now being increased to support ongoing progression.

Floorbooks captured and shared children's play and learning. The child's voice was evident throughout these. Parents were encouraged to look at the floorbooks and leave comments. These books were showcased throughout the service and included the children as the authors. This provided them with a sense of ownership.

## Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

### Quality Indicator - 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 warm, nurturing and responsive care that supported their wellbeing. Staff knew children well and had a good understanding of their needs and strategies that were in place to support them to achieve. A parent shared, 'happy with the service our child receives, the staff are kind, caring and compassionate towards all children and supportive towards parents.' This supported children to develop confidence and form positive relationships in a responsive and caring environment.

The service ensured that positive and consistent relationships with children and families was a priority. Families were welcomed into the setting at drop off and pick up times which had a positive impact on supporting smooth transitions and ensuring parents felt valued. A variety of methods were used to engage with families, for example, daily chats, newsletters and regular invites into the service. These approaches to developing family engagement have supported parents to feel valued and actively involved in the service.

Children had individual personal plans in place which were detailed and included all required information to meet each child's needs. The plans were reviewed and updated frequently; the service should ensure that all reviews are signed off by parents. Plans included chronologies and identified other professionals involved in a child's care. This ensured that the needs of children and their families were fully met.

The mealtime experience in one room provided a valuable social experience for children where independence and life skills were developed. This was not consistent across both rooms. The service were responsive to a discussion regarding mealtimes and this was reflected within the mealtime experience on the second day of inspection. A parent shared, 'my children love the lunches and love getting to pick each morning. They also really enjoy being snack helper.' This experience resulted in a relaxed, sociable and welcoming experience for children in both rooms.

Medication was managed safely and effectively in line with current guidance, supporting children's health and wellbeing. Clear recording of dates on consent forms would further strengthen the review process for long-term medication.



## What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

### Requirements

#### Requirement 1

By 17 May 2024 the provider must ensure that the safety, health and wellbeing of the children is improved.

To do this the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) ensure that staff are knowledgeable and competent in relation to safe record keeping and administration of medication
- b) implement a system for management to audit and review the storage, management and administration of medicine.

This is to comply with Regulations 4 and 10 and of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210)

4.— (1) A provider must:

- (a) make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users;

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

“I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources.” (4.27)

This requirement was made on 9 May 2024.

#### Action taken on previous requirement

Staff are knowledgeable regarding the administration of medication. Consent forms are in place along with emergency plans if required. Medication is stored safely and securely. Medication is being regularly audited.

**Met - within timescales**

## 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 safety, health and wellbeing when eating, the provider should ensure that staff deployment supports an immediate response to emergency situations such as choking incidents. This should include, but is not limited to, increasing staff knowledge and competency in using Care Inspectorate good practice guidance: 'Prevention and Management of Choking Episodes in Babies and Children.'

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that:

"I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes." (HSCS 3.14)

This area for improvement was made on 9 May 2024.

#### Action taken since then

Staff deployment was well managed over the busier periods and supported children's needs. Children were safe while eating.

This area for improvement has been met.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

The provider should ensure the setting safe and secure this should include and not limited to having appropriate measures in place to ensure the setting is safe and secure.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "My environment is safe and secure." (HSCS, 5.19)

This area for improvement was made on 9 May 2024.

#### Action taken since then

The service have developed the security of the nursery. There are now key fob entry systems on the main doors. Doors are alarmed and main doors manned by staff during pick up and drop off times.

This area for improvement has been met.

#### Previous area for improvement 3

To keep children safe and healthy and to promote their wellbeing, the service should improve infection prevention and control measures. This includes but is not limited to:

- a) providing children with utensils to self-serve snack to prevent cross-contamination of food
- b) ensuring that correct hand washing routines and effective hand hygiene practice are established and maintained, according to infection prevention and control guidance.

This is to ensure that infection prevention and control practices are consistent with the Public Health Scotland document: "Health protection in children and young people settings, including education"

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice." (HSCS 4.11)

This area for improvement was made on 9 May 2024.

#### Action taken since then

Children were using tongs to self-serve during snack times and handwashing was taking place at appropriate times.

This area for improvement has been met.

#### Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure that children benefit from improvements which have the greatest positive impacts on their experiences and outcomes, the service should ensure that they have robust quality assurance processes in place.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) regular opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation of practice
- b) regular monitoring of staff practice to identify good quality skills and practice as well as training needs
- c) regular monitoring of the quality of children's experiences and care
- d) identifying measurable impacts that will benefit children's experiences and outcomes.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes." (HSCS 4.19)

This area for improvement was made on 9 May 2024.

#### Action taken since then

The service have developed their approach to self-evaluation and reflection. There is regular monitoring of practice, environments and experiences which includes actions to be taken forward and records the impact on outcomes and experiences for children.

This area for improvement has been met.

#### Previous area for improvement 5

To support continuity of care with regard to children's safety and wellbeing at all times, the provider should ensure that staff are deployed appropriately across the day.

This should include, but is not limited to planning staff breaks around busier times of the day such as snack and meal times.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence guidance and best practice." (HSCS 4.11)

This area for improvement was made on 9 May 2024.

## Action taken since then

Staff deployment was well managed and staff were deployed appropriately across both rooms throughout the day.

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](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	4 - Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
Children experience high quality spaces	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](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 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.