

St. Patrick's Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Carronbank Crescent
Denny
FK6 6DW

Telephone: 01324 508 840

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 December 2025

Service provided by:
Falkirk Council

Service provider number:
SP2004006884

Service no:
CS2008177288

About the service

St. Patrick's Primary School Nursery is a daycare of children service provided by Falkirk council. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 64 children from three years of age up to an age to attend primary school.

The service is in the town of Denny on the same site as the primary school. The accommodation comprises of a playroom that opens onto a fully enclosed outdoor play space.

It is near local shops and public transport routes.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 8 December 2025, between 09:40 and 16:30 and 9 December between 09:30 and 12:30. 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:

- observed children using the service
- received feedback from 16 families
- spoke with the staff and management team
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure that 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.

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

- The vision, values, and aims of the service were embedded in everyday practice.
- Children's right to play was at the heart of the service, resulting in children who were happy, confident, and having fun.
- Children experienced genuine warmth, caring, and nurturing approaches to support their wellbeing.
- A key strength of the setting was the proactive and positive relationships developed with families.

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 | 5 - Very Good |
| Children are supported to achieve | 5 - Very Good |

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

Leadership 5 - Very Good

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.

Leadership and management of staff and resources

The vision, values, and aims of the service were embedded in everyday practice. This was evident in the warm welcome from staff, and the kind, caring relationships children and families experienced. These values were consistently reflected, shaping inclusive environments and high-quality experiences for children. As a result, children benefited from a setting where they felt safe, valued, and supported to thrive. Parents comments included, "From the minute you walk in, you are greeted with smiles that are genuine. They [staff] know each child so well, and make my [child] feel safe and content in nursery".

Self-evaluation supported on-going improvement. Staff worked well together to reflect on practice and identify areas for development. The team demonstrated passion and commitment to continually improving outcomes for children. Staff told us, "We use quality improvement framework, and challenge question wheels made by Falkirk council, discussing these as a team, and identifying next steps", and "We are continually considering how we can do better, and all understand it is something that is constantly evolving. As a team we are all involved in the self-evaluation process". Changes such as the introduction of off-site forest experiences, and the development of the garden had been successfully implemented and sustained. As a result, children benefited from high-quality play and learning.

Effective audit systems covered key aspects of nursery provision. This included accidents and incidents to identify patterns, and reduce risks; and experiences, interactions, and spaces to monitor the quality of learning environments and engagement. We highlighted the importance of monitoring agreed actions to track progress effectively, to consistently provide positive outcomes for children.

The nursery fostered strong family partnerships and distributed leadership among staff, creating a collaborative and inclusive culture. Families were actively involved, with their views shaping meaningful improvements, such as shared breakfasts to strengthen relationships with key workers, and the 'Play on Pedals' initiative to enrich children's experiences. These actions increased parental engagement, and families told us they felt valued and included. Parents comments included, "The nursery give plenty of opportunity for parents to be involved in the nursery, like 'Bookbug' and family off-site days etc". Staff were empowered to lead projects that enhanced learning through play, and supported children's achievements. Staff contributed to the nursery improvement plan, reflecting a shared commitment to improve outcomes for children. To further strengthen partnerships and keep families informed about on-going developments, we discussed developing a parent-friendly version of the improvement plan.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

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.

Playing, learning and developing

Children's right to play was at the heart of the service, resulting in children who were happy, confident, and having fun. We observed children chatting, laughing, and leading their own play, both indoors and outdoors. Free-flow opportunities were available for the whole session, and in all weathers. This supported independence, choice, and contributed to positive wellbeing.

Staff used relevant theory and practice to support children, and were responsive in their interactions. They were available to children, and used developmentally appropriate strategies such as commentary and explaining, to support and extend children's language and understanding. Staff facilitated children's play, by explaining concepts and asking questions. We discussed how this could be enhanced, by using approaches such as 'wondering aloud' to enable children to extend their own thinking, and consolidate their learning.

Children experienced a broad range of skills through an enabling environment. For example, they had opportunities for risky play, problem solving, and creative experiences. They were confident, and for the majority of the time, engaged in meaningful play, which supported their wellbeing and development.

Children's language, literacy, and numeracy was well supported across the nursery. Opportunities for emerging writing, as well as exploring early numeracy concepts, were available indoors and outdoors. This supported children to learn key skills through play experiences. Staff spent quality time with children, sharing stories, and having meaningful conversations. This helped spark a love of reading, and supported children in developing important talking and listening skills.

Staff effectively used observation and assessment to plan experiences, and provide children with support and challenge in their play. Staff used this information to plan in a responsive and intentional way. Tracking information was used to implement additional supports, and provided a holistic overview of children's progress. Children's on-going learning was supported by sharing observations and next steps with parents, via a digital platform. These were personal to each child, and highlighted their achievements. As a result, children were effectively supported to learn and progress. Families told us, "We get weekly updates on my [child's] learning journal", and, "I have been involved in reviews regularly, and I find those sessions very informative and collaborative".

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

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.

Nurturing care and support

Children experienced genuine warmth, caring, and nurturing approaches to support their wellbeing. Staff took time to get to know children, with a focus on building positive relationships. Children were supported to make choices as staff were attuned to their routines, and what was important to them. This contributed to children feeling safe, secure, and happy.

Children's personal care needs were met with dignity and respect, ensuring their rights were promoted. Staff empowered children to make choices about their care, play, and learning which promoted autonomy, independence, and confidence. For example, when accessing the lending library, joining lunch, or snack, and

engaging in self-care. These practices reflected a commitment to respecting children's voices, and supported their rights in everyday experiences.

Children experienced sociable, unhurried mealtimes, including the choice to have lunch outdoors. Free-flow opportunities meant that children experienced uninterrupted play throughout the session. Children had opportunities for independence, including preparing food, self-serving, pouring drinks, and tidying away dishes. These experiences supported the development of important life skills. Staff ate with children during mealtimes, and used these daily routines to connect and spend time together. Interactions were relaxed and positive, creating a calm atmosphere at lunch.

Children's wellbeing was effectively supported through regularly reviewed personal plans developed in partnership with families. Staff demonstrated a strong knowledge of each child, and used this to meet their individual needs. Some personal plans were detailed, meaningful, and tailored to children's individual strengths, needs, and interests. Children would benefit from clearer recording of strategies in their personal plans, to support their everyday experiences.

Staff understood children's medical needs which supported them to keep children safe. Medication was audited to ensure that it was in date and still required. We found some permission forms lacked detail, and we suggested this is reviewed and updated to enhance the safety of the management of medication.

A key strength of the setting was the proactive and positive relationships developed with families, to ensure positive outcomes. A warm and welcoming atmosphere had been created within the environment, helping children and families feel valued and included. One parent commented, "Staff are warm and welcoming. I know that there is always someone available to speak to me if I have a question, or an update on my child's needs. Staff seem interested in getting to know families through regular conversations".

Partnership working was highly effective, as staff recognised the importance of engaging with children and their families at the earliest possible stage. Home, park, or garden visits were offered before children started at the service. This provided staff opportunity to build relationships, and helped them develop a holistic understanding of the child and family. On-going opportunities such as stay and play sessions, and shared breakfasts provided rich, meaningful experiences for families to engage in. Families spoke very positively about these experiences. These approaches fostered strong, collaborative relationships with families.

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 | 5 - Very Good |
| Playing, learning and developing | 5 - Very Good |
| Children are supported to achieve | 5 - Very Good |
| Nurturing care and support | 5 - Very 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 iarrtas.

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.