

# Golspie Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Golspie Primary School  
Back Road  
Golspie  
KW10 6RW

Telephone: 01408 633 520

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
20 June 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Highland Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003001693

**Service no:**  
CS2003017213

## About the service

Golspie Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a service to a maximum of 30 children, aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school. The service is operated by The Highland Council. The head teacher is the registered manager of the nursery and is responsible for more than one school. The service operates term time only.

Golspie Primary School Nursery is located within Golspie Primary School in Golspie, Sutherland. The premises consists of a playroom, with access to an enclosed outdoor play area. At the time of the inspection there were 17 children in attendance.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Thursday 19 June 2025. 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 information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

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

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 were cared for by staff who were warm, compassionate and nurturing.
- Children had fun and were actively involved in leading their own play and learning experiences.
- Children were very well supported to develop their skills in language and literacy and consolidate their learning through play.
- Children were offered exciting and developmentally appropriate play spaces outdoors, supporting their physical, emotional and cognitive development.
- Good leadership resulted in staff who had confidence in their capacity to support children and families to progress and achieve.
- Staffing levels had been carefully considered to ensure good quality outcomes for children.

## 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?	5 - Very 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 this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, settled and having fun. They experienced genuine warmth and caring approaches, supporting children to feel nurtured and loved. Staff were compassionate and responsive in their interactions, resulting in very strong attachments being formed. This contributed to an inclusive ethos and meant all children were confident and engaged in their play experiences. One parent commented, "Golspie nursery is a happy environment for my (child) to attend. The staff are friendly and informative via face to face and also via seesaw".

Staff managed minor disputes between children very well. They skilfully empowered children to think about their choices and how this impacted on their peers. This demonstrated a very calm and supportive approach which helped children regulate their emotions and enabled them to resolve minor conflicts. As a result, children were gaining confidence and skills in regulating their individual emotional security and wellbeing.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through effective use of personal planning. Staff worked in partnership with parents to ensure effective information sharing. As a result, staff had a very good knowledge of children's holistic needs, which enabled them to provide continuity in their care. Staff worked proactively with other professionals which supported them to identify strategies of support based on individual needs. Staff were attuned to children's individual needs and overall used strategies consistently and effectively, supporting them to reach their full potential.

Children experienced unhurried mealtimes with a relaxed, positive atmosphere. Their independence was encouraged through opportunities such as, helping to set the table at lunch time and self-serving and pouring their own milk and drinks. Children were not provided with appropriate utensils during snack. For example, there was shared handling of food as children reached into communal plates with their hands. This had the potential to increase the risk of infection spreading and cross contamination. Staff placed themselves thoughtfully at snack and lunchtimes to ensure children's safety whilst eating. However, due to competing priorities at lunchtime there was missed opportunities for high quality conversations.

Children and families were valued and respected. The service had reviewed their collection procedures and now welcomed parents into the setting to drop off and collect their children. Additionally, parents received regular updates via an online platform. This contributed to creating positive attachments between children and staff, and enabled opportunities for information to be shared between nursery and home. Most parents felt communication was positive. Families told us, "The seesaw updates are regular and informative. Staff are always available for face-to-face discussions if required" and "we get updated daily. I particularly like seesaw with regular updates". However, one parent told us that they would like more information about their child's day.

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had fun and were actively involved in leading their own play and learning experiences. Staff demonstrated a genuine interest in supporting play as they valued the importance of children having fun. Interesting, exciting materials and provocations promoted children's curiosity and creativity. Staff interacted skilfully to support children's curiosities. This meant that interests were responded to in the moment as staff engaged with children to deepen their learning.

Children were very well supported to develop their skills in language and literacy and consolidate their learning through play. Staff were songful throughout the inspection, singing familiar songs which captured children's attention, enhancing language development. Staff read stories to children in the moment. This sparked their imagination, encouraged active listening and nurtured their interests in books. These spontaneous interactions created a warm environment where children were eager to participate, laying strong foundations for communication skills. Opportunities for numeracy and maths were naturally woven into children's play and learning. Children explored counting, numbers, time, size and shape through everyday experiences.

Planning approaches were being developed to ensure a balance of responsive and intentional planning. There was scope for this to be developed to ensure daily observations meaningfully inform future planning. Recording of key learning and meaningful next steps for children was not yet consistent across all planning information. Developing a consistent recording approach would help to capture children's progress and support planning for next steps. The service were aware of this and were keen to develop this area of practice.

## 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 offered exciting and developmentally appropriate play spaces outdoors, supporting their physical, emotional and cognitive development. Children spent a significant part of their day exploring a natural environment. This encouraged active movement, helping to build strength, coordination and motor skills through climbing, balancing and running on uneven terrain.

The outdoor area stimulated children's imagination and creativity. They had access to a variety of engaging and challenging resources, for example, open-ended and natural materials, including sticks, stones and large loose parts such as, wooden planks, crates and pipes. Children made good use of these items to create obstacle courses and challenge themselves. Staff supported children well during these experiences, helping them to consider how to keep themselves safe when taking risks and encouraged them to work collaboratively with their peers. Children also had fun playing and investigating in the mud kitchen, using real life items such as, pans and baking trays. One child told us they were making cakes. This allowed them to use their imagination and explore real life scenarios supporting social interaction and the development of fine motor skills through scooping, mixing and pouring.

Children's safety was promoted when they played outdoors. Staff were aware of where they needed to position themselves to ensure they had good vision of children playing. This contributed to children being safe as they played outdoors. Staff worked well together to ensure children were accounted for at all times, undertaking regular counts as children arrived and left the setting.

The service had made a positive start in creating a welcoming indoor environment, with some homely touches such as, soft furnishings and a cosy reading corner that contributed to children feeling comfortable and secure. These elements supported children's emotional wellbeing and a sense of belonging. However, there was room for improvement to further enhance the homely atmosphere. The service were aware of this and had identified the indoor environment as an improvement priority.

The layout of the indoor playroom ensured that children could move around areas with ease, allowing them to access resources independently. Children were confident while moving around the indoor play space and used resources well to support their ideas and interests. They also had the freedom to transport and move around resources to extend their play and learning further.

The service did not have free flow access between the indoor and outdoor area; however, the service was appropriately staffed to accommodate children's choice to play indoors or outdoors. Consistent use of walkie talkies enhanced staff communication and allowed them to stay in constant contact across different areas of the setting such as, the indoor and outdoor spaces. This contributed to keeping children safe.

## 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 improvements are led well

There was a shared responsibility to supporting improvement within the service. Since the last inspection, quality assurance processes had been developed and were beginning to impact children's care, play and learning. As a result, focussed and meaningful systems for the leadership team and staff to review and monitor various aspects of the service were in place. This meant that areas for improvement were identified, shared and actions were taken to make positive changes to children's experiences. For example, the flow of the day and children's play experiences. This resulted in improved outcomes for children.

Good leadership resulted in staff who had confidence in their capacity to support children and families to progress and achieve. There was an improved cycle of reflection and improvement within the service. Team meetings were used to reflect on action points and to ensure that timescales identified within the improvement plan were achieved. Staff engaged effectively with the process to reflect and improve their practice, enabling learning to be identified.

The manager and staff demonstrated their commitment to the service and were motivated to make improvements to ensure positive outcomes for children. Staff told us they felt well-supported by the leadership team. This contributed to everyone feeling an increased confidence to initiate well-informed change and take responsibility for the process. As a result, children benefitted from improved outcomes and play experiences. The leadership team should continue to embed and sustain the good quality practices, to ensure children and families continue to experience good quality care and support.

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

We evaluated this key question as very good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Children were cared for by staff who were warm, compassionate and nurturing. Staff provided individualised support by effectively engaging with children throughout the inspection. Staff demonstrated an awareness of when and how to effectively intervene, picking up on cues to support children's wellbeing and extend their play experiences. This resulted in children who felt respected within the service. Families were complimentary of the staff team, comments included, "The staff are kind and caring" and "the staff are very friendly, competent and trustworthy".

Children were supported by motivated and enthusiastic staff who were committed to their role. Staff shared a common vision and worked hard to achieve good quality play and learning for children. They were supportive of each other and their differing skills, knowledge and experience complimented one another. This resulted in good quality experiences for children. They communicated well with each other and in a respectful manner to ensure children's needs were met consistently across the session. This contributed to children being respected and created a positive team ethos within the service.

Staff were proactive in recognising any gaps and ensuring effective supervision of children. They placed themselves thoughtfully to ensure all children's individual needs were well-considered. As a result, children benefitted from a very calm and positive experience.

The approach to staffing in the service was outcome focussed. Staffing levels had been carefully considered to ensure good quality outcomes for children. Routines and the use of spaces had been planned for appropriately. This meant children's experience across the whole day was positive.

The manager told us that, availability of supply staff was limited. The manager strived to provide consistency of care within the staff team. Where possible the manager used the same supply staff to minimise disruption to children's routines. However, there were occasions when the manager was unable to identify staff to manage absence. This meant they had to make changes to service delivery, to ensure children's safety.

## 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 enable children to receive high quality play, learning and development opportunities, the manager should ensure staff support children's choice and are responsive to their individual interests and needs.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

**This area for improvement was made on 6 September 2024.**

## Action taken since then

To enable children to receive high quality play, learning and development opportunities, the manager and staff ensured children's choice and were responsive to individual needs and interests.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

## Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children are safeguarded and protected from harm, the provider should at a minimum:

- a) Ensure the manager and staff have the required skills and knowledge in relation to recognising and responding to child protection concerns.
- b) Ensure the manager and staff are competent and knowledgeable about national, local, the service's own child protection procedures and 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

**This area for improvement was made on 6 September 2024.**

## Action taken since then

Overall children were safeguarded and protected from harm. The leadership team had recognised and responded to child protection concerns in most instances. However, on occasion the service did not consistently follow child protection procedures. This had the potential to compromise children's safety.

**This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.**

## 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	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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