

Hop, Skip & Jump Nursery Day Care of Children

St. John's Hall
Russell Place
Forres
IV36 1BL

Telephone: 01309 673 668

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
27 November 2025

Service provided by:
Beth Campbell

Service provider number:
SP2008009842

Service no:
CS2008178083

About the service

Hop, Skip and Jump Nursery is a day care of children service. It is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 24 children, aged from three years to not yet of an age to attend primary school, and for 10 children aged between two and three years. The service is provided by Beth Campbell.

The service operates from a church hall that has a kitchen, toilets, and nappy changing facilities. Children are cared for in two linked playrooms. There is an outdoor play area to the front and rear of the building, that can be directly accessed from the playrooms. The service is close to local shops, library, parks, and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, which took place on 26 November 2025 between 08:30 and 16:00 and 27 November between 09:00 and 12:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. There was a maximum of 15 children present at the inspection.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- received four questionnaires from families
- received two questionnaires from staff
- spoke with 6 parents
- spoke with the manager and staff
- assessed core assurances
- observed practice and daily experiences
- 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.

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing relationships and warm, responsive care that fostered their development and wellbeing.
- The manager and staff knew children and families well. They were striving to create a welcoming environment where children and families felt included, valued, and supported.
- Children were able to play and learn at their own pace, having fun as they freely explored both inside and outside.
- The importance of daily outdoor play, and the benefits for enhancing learning and wellbeing were well recognised.
- Staff understood that interacting and exploring with children was a valuable way to build vocabulary, and foster a sense of wonder.
- Further development of open ended and real-life materials, threaded throughout play areas, would help to extend rich, challenging play and foster curiosity.
- Purposeful self-evaluation was being established with the aim of providing high quality care and learning.

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

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 shared vision for the setting had been developed that incorporated the views of families and children. They would be actively involved in the future design and review of the vision values and aims, to help promote a sustained vision that remained reflective of families and children. We suggested that a further consideration was the inclusion of the wider community.

Children and families were helped to know what was important when meeting their needs, as leaders were creating opportunities for them to share responsibility for change. Purposeful self-evaluation was being established, with the aim of providing high quality care and learning. Parents were invited to share their views during discussions, an open event, and through formal surveys. There was further scope to ensure that children were also central to the self-evaluation process.

Staff were gaining confidence in leading and sharing improvements, such as the arrangement of the play environment. They were being given opportunities to reflect together, and they were beginning to use the reflections to bring about positive change.

Quality assurance and moderation of activities were in the process of being consistently implemented to promote improvement. Having agreed standards and expectations that were understood by all staff, would help to ensure that suitable approaches to improvement were identified. (See area for improvement 1).

Leaders ensured that new staff were safely recruited, and that they understood their responsibilities within the team. An induction programme helped to ensure that staff were being well supported and confident in meeting the needs of the children.

The small staff team was supportive of each other, there was a positive and responsive culture that supported children's wellbeing. There was a mix of experience across the staff team that had been recognised by leaders. Continued opportunities for the individual strengths of staff to be utilised to build consistent levels of skills would support team knowledge, and enhance outcomes for children.

Areas for improvement

1. To further support continuous improvement that enhances the delivery of high-quality practice, and improved outcomes for all. The provider should embed and sustain robust methods of self-evaluation and quality assurance, that has an appropriate pace of change.

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

'I am supported to give regular feedback on how I experience my care and support, and the organisation uses learning from this to improve' (HSCS 4.8) and,

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

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

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 physical environment whether indoors or outdoors, was welcoming and equipped to meet the needs of the children that was secure and safe. The service was striving to make the best use of spaces to help create a motivating environment for the children. The importance of daily outdoor play and the benefits for enhancing learning and wellbeing were well recognised. Children were able to choose if they wanted to play indoors or outdoors, they were encouraged to explore and build independence.

The environment provided opportunities for children to make decisions, and act independently within safe boundaries of the setting. They were being encouraged to lead most aspects of their play. Extending opportunities for children to take on responsibilities such as snack/lunch times would also help to support independence, and also increase confidence. Children were being supported to develop their knowledge, respect, and understanding of their wider community, such as visits to the library, parks, and connections with the local supermarket.

Staff promoted children's safety whilst considering a positive, balanced approach to risk in children's play. They knew who was in their care, whether indoors or outdoors, and remained vigilant to risk. As a result, children were safe and their opportunities to enjoy fun play experiences were not compromised. Children were beginning to assess and manage risk for themselves that helped to build resilience. When a child was able to climb up and down the climbing frame by themselves, they smiled and showed a real sense of pride in their achievement. The protection of children's personal information complied with relevant best practice and requirements.

Staff had a clear understanding and confidence to provide and promote a clean and safe environment. Personal care arrangements were effectively planned for, and supported infection prevention and control practice. Children were being encouraged to wash their hands well when eating and after using the toilet. We suggested that increased supervision of hand washing after outdoor play would also support robust infection control practice.

Children play and learn**4 - Good**

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 able to be responsible and confident in their play as a result of the quality play experiences offered to them. The responsive and caring interactions of staff supported children's social development. Staff understood that interacting and exploring with children was a valuable way to build vocabulary and foster a sense of wonder. There was scope to strengthen these approaches, and embed these practices further to support the extension of children's thinking and skills through problem solving.

Children were able to play and learn at their own pace, having fun as they explored. Children made informed choices about their play, and clearly enjoyed the opportunity to choose whether to play inside or outside. Creative approaches helped to engage children's imagination and their play and learning. Skills included language, literacy, and numeracy that were enhanced through playful experiences. Children enjoyed singing songs, listening to and joining in with stories, exploring when creating meals in the role play kitchen, drawing, and cutting. Further development of open ended and real-life materials, threaded throughout play areas, would help to extend rich, challenging play and foster curiosity.

Careful observations and assessment generally recognising children's progress and achievements. There was recognition that continued monitoring would help to ensure that they reflected individual learning, and enabled any additional supports to be identified and planned for. Learning opportunities were being offered through a balance of intentional and responsive planning. Experiences should continue to reflect children's ideas, curiosities, and meaningful next steps in learning.

Working with families to support their understanding of the benefits to children of play-based learning experiences, would help to foster a collaborative approach of trust and cooperation. Families were invited to share in their child's learning journey through face-to-face meetings, and invites to the setting, such as stay and play, and open events.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

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.

Practice was built on the understanding that nurturing relationships were essential for children's growth and development. As a result, children experienced warm, consistent, and responsive care that fostered their wellbeing. The importance of supportive transitions was recognised, and there was an understanding that their significance could vary for each child.

Children's food choices were nutritious, culturally appropriate, and safely prepared to account for any specific dietary needs, allergies, or intolerances. Mealtimes were a calm and pleasant social experience, supported by the presence of staff who sat with the children. Consideration had been given to promote children's independence, such as serving their own sides, and collecting and clearing their own plates. Fresh water was readily available throughout the day to help children remain hydrated.

There was consideration of creating diverse spaces that supported children to socialise, play in small groups, or alone, if they wished. This positively impacted on children's ability to regulate their emotions and build social skills.

Consistency in a child's care and routines such as mealtimes, nap times, and personal care provided children with a sense of safety and security. It was recognised that they provided rich opportunities to connect with the children and support their growth. When children were tired staff responded to their need for comfort, such as having cuddles, or snuggling up on the bean bag for a story. Where children sought reassurance from staff, such as a hug, it was readily and warmly given.

The manager and staff knew children and families well. They were striving to create a welcoming environment where children and families felt included, valued, and supported. Families had regular opportunity to discuss their child's care and development, both formally and informally. Parents shared that they always felt welcomed into the setting by the warm and friendly approach of the staff and manager.

Children's wellbeing was supported through personal planning that was being tailored to individual needs and interests, and were regularly reviewed. To help ensure that support needs were identified, a proactive approach to working with children, families, and other professionals was being established. Ensuring clarity when updating information would help to support continuity in a child's care, and that it was shared appropriately.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 1 September 2024, the provider must ensure that improved outcomes for children by implementing effective and robust quality assurance processes.

To achieve this, the provider must, at a minimum ensure that:

- a) Regular and focused monitoring and evaluation is carried out across the setting.
- b) Regular supervision and appraisal meetings are carried out, and recorded to support ongoing professional development.

This is to comply with regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This requirement was made on 23 February 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

The provider was establishing a regular and focused programme of evaluation, staff supervision, and appraisals were being undertaken to help support professional development.

Met - outwith 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 ensure that children's current needs and preferences are planned for and met, the provider should ensure that children's personal plans are used in practice, and are reflective of children's needs. This should include, but is not limited to, ensuring plans are reviewed and shared with parents/carers, at a minimum of every six months.

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

Inspection report

'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

This area for improvement was made on 23 February 2024.

Action taken since then

Personal plans were being reviewed with families, so that current needs and preferences were planned for and used in practice.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure that children are kept safe and healthy, the provider should make sure that the potential spread of infection is minimised. This should include but is not limited to developing nappy changing areas and supporting children to wash their hands.

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

'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.24).

This area for improvement was made on 23 February 2024.

Action taken since then

Infection and prevention control practice helped to reduce the potential spread of infection, hand washing practices followed by staff and children supported good practice. Nappy changing areas supported children's safety and wellbeing.

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	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	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

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Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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