

Pitfour School Nursery Day Care of Children

Newlands Road
Mintlaw
Peterhead
AB42 5GP

Telephone: 01771 676 615

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 January 2026

Service provided by:
Aberdeenshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000029

Service no:
CS2003015724

About the service

Pitfour School Nursery is accommodated within Pitfour Primary School, located in the rural village of Mintlaw, Aberdeenshire. It is close to local shops, parks, and other community services. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 30 children aged three years to entry into primary school.

Children are cared for in a playroom with direct access to a spacious outdoor area. A small courtyard can also be accessed from the playroom.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced follow up inspection which took place on 13 January 2026 between 09:15 and 14:15. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

The inspection focussed on the requirements and areas for improvement made during the previous inspection which was completed on 9 October 2025. We evaluated how the service had addressed these to improve outcomes for children. During this follow up inspection, we increased the evaluations for quality indicators 'Leadership and management of staff and resources' and 'Nurturing care and support' to satisfactory/adequate because the service had made progress by building on key strengths.

Key messages

- Sufficient progress had been made in addressing some of the concerns from the previous inspection.
- Four requirements and one area for improvement were met. Two areas for improvement remained unmet due to insufficient time to embed changes.
- The deployment of staffing was effective to support children's health, wellbeing, play, and learning.
- Quality assurance and self evaluation processes led to improved care for children and should be further embedded in practice to sustain changes.
- Children played in an attractive and well set out playroom and benefitted from free-flow indoor-outdoor play opportunities.
- Children experienced positive and safe mealtimes.
- Children were well supported by a consistent staff team who knew their personalities and care needs well.
- Communication and engagement with families should be further developed.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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

Leadership 3 – Satisfactory / Adequate

Improvements to leadership and the management of staff and resources resulted in improved outcomes for children and their families and the requirement being met (see section 'What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection' at the end of this report).

As a result of the improvements and positive impact these were having on outcomes for children, we have re-graded this quality indicator upwards from weak to adequate.

Children are supported to achieve 3 – Satisfactory / Adequate

Improvements to children's care and support resulted in improved outcomes for children and the requirement being met (see section 'What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection' at the end of this report).

As a result of the improvements and positive impact these were having on outcomes for children, we have re-graded this quality indicator upwards from weak to adequate.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 16 December 2025, the provider must ensure staff are supported to deliver high quality, consistent care that leads to positive outcomes for children and their families.

To achieve this, the provider must:

a) Develop a clear and shared vision, values, and aims for the setting with staff, children, and families. These must be:

- clearly communicated and understood by all staff
- evident in daily practice and decision making
- used to guide interactions, planning, and improvement work.

b) Ensure that staff are supported by a robust framework of policies and procedures that are:

- clear, detailed, and specific to the setting
- inclusive of key areas, such as promoting positive behaviour and child protection
- regularly reviewed and used to guide consistent, safe, and nurturing practice.

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

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

This requirement was made on 9 October 2025.

Action taken on previous requirement

A clear set of visions, values, and aims had been developed and used to positively inform practice. Staff, parents, and children had been involved in the development of these which meant they reflected their aspirations and helped everyone know what to expect. This was reflected in the nurturing care and positive staff interactions with children.

All policies and procedures were specific to the service and had been reviewed to ensure they were up-to-date and reflective of current practice. This included a review of the child protection policy to help protect and keep children safe from harm and abuse. A promoting positive behaviour policy had been developed to help staff support children's wellbeing.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 2

By 16 December 2025, to safeguard children and support their care, learning, and development, the provider must ensure that staffing arrangements are safe, effective, and responsive to children's individual needs.

To do this, the provider must at a minimum:

- a) Carry out regular assessments and reviews of each child's care, learning, and support needs and ensure that staffing levels and deployment are sufficient to meet these needs consistently.
- b) Establish and implement robust quality assurance systems that evaluate children's care experiences and determine whether staffing arrangements are enabling, responsive, and child-centred.

This is in order to comply with section 7(1)(a) of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15).

This requirement was made on 9 October 2025.

Action taken on previous requirement

The recruitment of staffing helped promote consistent nurturing and responsive care. This contributed to confident children who were at ease with staff who knew them well.

Changes to staff break times had been made which meant children experienced consistent care and support, including during key times such as lunch and drop-off and arrival times.

A quality assurance calendar had been introduced to help the manager monitor and maintain positive outcomes for children. Effective quality assurance to sustain changes and help ensure high quality care, play, and learning should be fully embedded into practice.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 3

By 16 December 2025, the provider and manager must ensure that children consistently experience safe, calm, and nurturing mealtimes that support their wellbeing and development.

To do this, the provider must at a minimum:

- a) Ensure staff provide children with the supervision, support, and care to meet their individual needs at mealtimes.
- b) Ensure children eat in a calm and relaxed environment.

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

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'If I need help with eating and drinking, this is carried out in a dignified way and my personal preferences are respected' (HSCS 1.34).

This requirement was made on 9 October 2025.

Action taken on previous requirement

Children enjoyed a calm and unhurried lunch. Positive changes to daily routines before lunch enabled staff to supervise and support effective handwashing.

Changes to staff breaks meant children were well supervised and supported when eating.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 4

By 16 December 2025, the provider and manager must ensure children are supported with nurturing care that meets their care needs and emotional wellbeing.

To do this, the provider and manager must at a minimum:

Ensure children's personal plans accurately reflect their individual needs to support their development and wellbeing, and that staff use this information effectively to provide consistent and responsive care.

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

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: '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); and 'As a child or young person I feel valued, loved, and secure' (HSCS 3.10).

This requirement was made on 9 October 2025.

Action taken on previous requirement

Children's personal plans were detailed and developed collaboratively with families and other agencies. Additional individual risk assessments had been completed for some children and were used to inform the effective deployment of staff.

This meant children were well cared for by a staff team who knew them well. Staff were responsive in their care and children were happy and settled.

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 positive outcomes and experiences for children and families, the provider and manager should implement robust quality assurance and self evaluation processes that lead to improvements in care, learning, and support.

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 October 2025.

Action taken since then

Ongoing self evaluation and quality assurance processes led to improved outcomes for children and families.

Changes to the environment meant it looked inviting, spacious, and well set out. The development of the courtyard meant children participated in free-flow indoor and outdoor play, contributing to improved engagement and supporting their health and wellbeing. Ongoing evaluation of mealtimes meant children were well supervised and enjoyed a calm and unhurried lunch. Staff were enthusiastic to further improve the nursery and were responsible for the development of play areas relevant to their strengths and interests. This should be continued.

A quality assurance calendar had been introduced to support the role and responsibilities of the manager. This included audits of children's personal plans to help ensure they were fully reflective of their individual needs. Staff appraisals had been completed and plans were in place to make these ongoing. Monthly staff meetings had been established and should now be embedded in practice.

Inspection report

This area for improvement has not been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The provider, manager, and staff must ensure that all children experience high quality play, learning, and development opportunities that are responsive to their individual needs and interests.

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 achieve my potential in my education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27).

This area for improvement was made on 9 October 2025.

Action taken since then

Children played in a welcoming and inviting environment. The layout changes meant staff could supervise the children and provide support to extend their ideas and thinking. Children experienced free-flow indoor-outdoor play and had fun splashing in puddles and experimenting with floating and sinking objects.

Together times were meaningful and enjoyed by the children who were very engaged and eager to participate. Opportunities for learning in numeracy and literacy was promoted through wall displays, together times, and embedded in play experiences. Children had fun playing and learning in the gym hall.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support effective communication and promote positive relationships with children and families, the provider and manager must develop and embed meaningful ways to involve families and share information about their child's care, learning, and development.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I can be meaningfully involved in how the organisations that support and care for me work and develop' (HSCS 4.6); and 'I am treated as an individual by people who respect my needs, choices, and wishes, and anyone making a decision about my future care and support knows me' (HSCS 3.13).

This area for improvement was made on 9 October 2025.

Action taken since then

Ways to support communication and promote positive relationships with children and families were ongoing. For example, parents and carers had been invited to stay-and-play sessions and to the Christmas concert. Families were involved in the development of the service aims and objectives and were asked for their suggestions and comments for improvement. The cloakroom looked attractive and displays had been created to inform parents and encourage ongoing engagement.

Training in building strong connection with families was planned to further support the development of parental engagement.

This area for improvement has not 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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Leadership and management of staff and resources	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Nurturing care and support	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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