

Newburgh Preschool Day Care of Children

63a Main Street
Newburgh
Ellon
AB41 6BL

Telephone: 01358789461

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 January 2026

Service provided by:
Newburgh Preschool

Service provider number:
SP2003000521

Service no:
CS2003002659

About the service

Newburgh Preschool is located on the main street of the coastal village of Newburgh, in Aberdeenshire. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 24 children from three years to those not yet attending primary school within playgroup. To provide a care service to a maximum of 15 children from two years to three years of age in two's group.

Children have access to a playroom, kitchen, toilet and changing area along with an enclosed outdoor area. The service is near to parks, local shops, the beach and other amenities.

Up to 10 children were present during the inspection.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 January 2026 between 08:30 and 17:00 and 21 January 2026 between 08:15 and 12:00. 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:

- spent time with children using the service
- spoke with one of their parents/carers
- received thirteen responses to our request for feedback from parents and staff
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- 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

- Children were very happy, confident and settled.
- Children were leaders of their own play and learning and could transport resources to meet their interests.
- The staff team worked very well together to meet children's needs.
- Partnership working with parents was a key strength in the service delivery.
- As part of quality assurance processes, management should ensure developments are reflected upon, with time scales, to sustain continuous 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 play and learn	4 - 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 4 – Good

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 playgroup's values, vision, and aims had recently been updated. Staff, children and families were actively involved in this process, with opportunities to share their views and contribute ideas. This inclusive approach ensured that everyone felt involved and represented. The updated values were clearly reflected in practice, and sharing them with families helped set clear expectations about the service.

Self-evaluation processes effectively supported the delivery of care tailored to the needs of children and their families. The setting gathered meaningful feedback from families through online questionnaires following events such as stay-and-play sessions, as well as during consultation on developments including the setting's vision and improvements to the outdoor environment. We discussed ways in which the preschool could further demonstrate to parents how their suggestions have been considered and implemented.

Parents told us they were involved in a meaningful way to help development of the setting. One parent said; "We have been asked for ideas and thoughts on what could be done to improve or add to the service. I was asked to come in and help with an activity with the children based on my own hobbies which I very much enjoyed". Another parent commented; "I am part of the committee and often asked our opinions on the running of the setting." As a result, parents felt valued, with their contributions reflected in the day-to-day experiences and development of the setting.

Regular staff meetings were protected time and used productively to discuss children's interests, staff training needs, signposting opportunities, and ongoing self-evaluation. Recently, the team had been exploring the new quality improvement framework collectively, using challenge questions to identify areas for improvement. This collaborative approach ensured all staff were actively involved in reflective practice, contributing to continuous, positive change within the setting.

Quality assurance and moderation processes were in place; however, there was scope to strengthen them further. For example, scheduling regular monitoring sessions within the quality assurance calendar, and reflecting on the outcomes, would support the setting to evidence progress more clearly. Audits were carried out effectively, with findings shared with staff through a monthly overview. This ensured that key information was communicated consistently and supported a shared understanding of priorities. Support and supervision sessions provided valuable opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice and receive tailored guidance, including signposting to relevant theory and training opportunities. We discussed the advantages of storing support and supervision records together in a consistent format, as this would promote continuity, clearer tracking of staff development, and more cohesive oversight across the team.

Leaders were passionate about skills for lifelong learning, which was central to improvement planning. Positive changes had already impacted on outcomes for children, such as the introduction of woodwork. The next step should be to evaluate these developments, measuring impact and guide future planning, supporting continuous improvement.

The playgroup had successfully recruited and retained a stable, skilled staff team, which contributed positively to the wellbeing of both children and practitioners. Safer recruitment procedures were generally followed; however, a recent oversight regarding the collection of references highlighted the need for more robust adherence to procedures. Management should ensure that future recruitment fully complies with safer recruitment requirements to maintain the safety and wellbeing of children and staff.

Induction processes were tailored to the specific roles and responsibilities of new staff, drawing effectively on the national induction resource. This supported new team members to feel confident and well prepared as they settled into their roles.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

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.

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of child development and learning, applying relevant theory and best practice to enrich play experiences and engage children meaningfully. Recent woodwork training undertaken by some staff enhanced outdoor learning opportunities, and management further supported professional development by signposting staff to additional reading and resources. Staff took on leadership roles, sharing their learning and supporting colleagues. This collaborative approach contributed to a consistent level of understanding across the team and increased confidence in delivering quality experiences for children.

Language, literacy, and numeracy were naturally embedded throughout play. In the construction area, children used measuring tapes to measure themselves and objects, developing early numeracy and comparison skills. At the water tray, they used mathematical language such as "nearly full" and "full", demonstrating an emerging understanding of volume and capacity. Children also sang spontaneously and engaged well with stories shared by adults, supporting communication, vocabulary, and early literacy. As a result, children were building early language, literacy, and numeracy foundations through meaningful, play based experiences.

Children were encouraged to lead their own play and were given space and time to explore their interests. We discussed the potential benefits of reducing transitions, particularly in the morning, and adopting a slower, more responsive pedagogy that prioritised relationships and uninterrupted play. This would further support children to be curious, creative, and confident problem solvers. During the session, children sustained engagement in a range of experiences. Indoors, they explored the water tray for extended periods, experimenting with ways to trap water. Outdoors, they investigated bubble making using different movements and techniques. Imaginative play was well developed, with groups collaborating to create sledges for toy animals using Duplo, negotiating ideas on how to keep them safe from "zombies." These examples demonstrated children were motivated, creative, and engaged.

Staff were consistently involved in children's play, showing genuine interest and using skilled interactions, including modelling, commenting, and open ended questioning to extend thinking. For example, after making play dough together, children became absorbed when loose parts were added, using the materials to create obstacle courses and sushi. When a child suggested making sushi, a staff member extended this idea by creating a shopping list with them, introducing early literacy in a meaningful way and reinforcing that the child's ideas were valued.

The setting also promoted families' understanding of play based learning through initiatives such as SIMOA the Elephant, where children took SIMOA home and families contributed to a diary focused on keeping SIMOA safe. This strengthened children's and families' awareness of safety, responsibility, and the role of managed risk in play.

Children were central to planning, with a balance of intentional and responsive approaches. Recent leadership training had strengthened management's ability to support planning. We discussed how floor books could be used more effectively to document and evaluate learning with children, capturing the depth and breadth of experiences and supporting reflection. Improving consistency in observations would further support the identification of progress and achievements. Strong relationships with families and effective links with other professionals enhanced planning; ensuring children's learning journeys were understood and supported.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

Nurturing care and support

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**.

Children benefited from being cared for in a setting built on the understanding that nurturing relationships are essential for growth and development. They experienced very warm, consistent and responsive care that supported their wellbeing. For example, children knew staff's names and invited them into their play. All parents told us they had a very strong relationship with the staff caring for their children. One parent said; "Whom ever is on drop off duty always tries to make conversations with each parent individually and you can tell they pay attention to little things. Nothing seems to be too much to ask them." Another commented; "Very friendly approachable staff who get to know all the family." As a result, children experienced consistently high quality nurturing relationships that promoted their emotional security, strengthened their wellbeing, and created a strong sense of trust between families and staff.

Transitions occurred naturally throughout the day, with children showing a strong awareness of familiar routines. As a result, children did not require additional prompts or countdowns and were confident and secure within the flow of the day. Children demonstrated high levels of emotional security, supported by consistent relationships with staff. The same staff team cared for the two year olds, helping to strengthen attachments and continuity of care. Staff also demonstrated a good understanding of best practice and relevant theories that underpin effective routines and transitions, contributing to a calm, predictable, and nurturing environment.

Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of the systems, processes, and approaches in place to keep children safe and protected. The child protection officer provided effective leadership by encouraging regular engagement with current best practice guidance. As a result, staff were clear, confident, and well informed in their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff communicated effectively throughout the day, regularly updating records to ensure accurate information about the number of children present. This supported safe supervision and accountability. Infection prevention and control procedures were very good. Robust hand washing practices and well established routines helped to maintain a hygienic environment and contributed positively to children's health and wellbeing.

Daily routines, including mealtimes, were used effectively to promote children's independence and learning. Children were actively involved in planning and preparing food, setting up for mealtimes, and carrying out tasks such as chopping, spreading, serving food, and pouring drinks. Mealtimes were calm, sociable experiences, with staff and children sitting together. This supported positive supervision as well as the development of children's social skills, independence, and language. Staff should remain mindful when moving away from the table, ensuring another team member is aware to maintain consistent supervision. Meals provided were nutritious and adapted to meet allergies and individual preferences, ensuring mealtimes were both enjoyable and safe for all children.

Children's wellbeing was supported through effective personal planning, which highlighted their interests, strengths, and needs. Staff worked with children, families, and professionals to sustain wellbeing. Wellbeing indicators provided a holistic overview, helping staff plan care and support. Where strategies were needed, they were implemented consistently to support individual children.

Parents spoke positively about their engagement with the setting. One parent shared, "Set times such as parent's evenings give focused, allocated time to discuss my child, but also at pick up and drop off, there are opportunities for daily catch ups." Another commented, "I would love to know a little bit more about what my child has been doing that day at pick up time... just one or two things so we can chat about them at home. This does happen sometimes but not consistently. This is the only thing I can suggest as an improvement." We encouraged the setting to consider the benefits of inviting parents into the indoor environment daily. This would provide families with opportunities to see the learning experiences on offer, observe their children at play, and ask questions. Strengthening these daily interactions would support more consistent communication and further enhance parental involvement in children's learning.

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

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Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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