

Aberdour Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Hawkcraig Road
Aberdour
Burntisland
KY3 0UP

Telephone: 01383 602 442

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 January 2026

Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
SP2004005267

Service no:
CS2003017074

About the service

Aberdour is a daycare of children service provided by Fife Council. It operates within Aberdour primary school. The facilities are on one level with direct access to a large, fully enclosed outdoor play area. The local community provided further experiences for children including local woods, beach and library.

The conditions of registration are:

1. The care service may be provided to a maximum of 28 children at any one time, age from three years to an age to attend primary school.

Any other conditions unique to the service

2. The care service may operate from the designated nursery room and other areas within the school, subject to risk assessment.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 20 January 2026 between 09:00 and 16:00, and Wednesday 21 January between 08:15 and 12:30. 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, information submitted by the service, and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with several children using the service
- spoke with three parents and carers, and took account of nine responses to our electronic questionnaire
- spoke with staff and management
- observed staff practice, and how their interactions with children supported their routines, play and learning
- reviewed documents.

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.

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, the linoleum was in need of repair. The head teacher advised there were plans in place to replace the flooring in the nursery playroom.

Key messages

- Children's inclusion and emotional wellbeing was supported by the strong, compassionate and nurturing relationships they had with staff.
- The value base of the staff team was effectively embedded in practice and had created an enabling and supportive environment, which created a shared vision for the service.
- Children and families benefited from an enthusiastic staff team who worked effectively together.
- Children's learning and development was enabled by a range of stimulating experiences provided indoors and outdoors.
- The committed staff team reflected on their practice, which enabled them to provide a quality service for 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 settings work, and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The value base of staff was evident in their practice as they had created a culture of respect and inclusiveness. Their strong, compassionate and nurturing relationships promoted a child-centred approach that met children's needs, rights and choices. Children knew they mattered and were valued as staff interactions were patient, kind and nurturing. As a result, they were confident, had developed close friendships and had a sense of belonging, as they were welcomed and safe in the setting.

Changes to the staff team had been well managed. This had enabled effective team working, which meant there was a shared vision for the development of the service. Parents shared "in the nursery setting, we had a fantastic relationship with the nursery staff who supported our child." And "staff are passionate about the children and their jobs, good communication to parents, they genuinely care for the children."

An embedded ethos of self-evaluation contributed to high-quality care and learning. All staff were familiar with the priorities in the improvement plan, and talked knowledgeably about their input. They used guidance, evaluation and links with other services to support improvement. As a result change was meaningful, as they considered the pace and approach that was right for the service.

A range of opportunities were used to gather the views of parents and children. The introduction of readily available, more informal approaches had increased participation. For example, using post-it notes and providing pebbles to make choices motivated families to share their views. In addition, well-embedded practice enabled children to make choices throughout the day. As a result, they experienced routines that were responsive to their needs. Parents told us it was "very much an open-door policy to give feedback to the nursery." This reflected the strong ethos of partnership within the setting. Parents and children felt valued as they knew their opinions mattered, and were used to influence change.

A range of audits and monitoring were undertaken to assess the work of the service, and identify improvements. They were used well to ensure practice followed guidance, which supported the best outcomes for children. To further strengthen evaluative practice, the service may wish to consider engaging a 'critical friend' model to enhance reflective dialogue. This could build on current practice, and enable staff to develop their evaluation skills as they shared feedback with colleagues.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the settings work, and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing.

Children benefited from a high-quality, well organised and stimulating environment which provided well planned play-based experiences. Open-ended resources helped children use their imagination, curiosity and

investigation skills. In respect of children's experiences, parents said that there were "too many to list." Examples they shared included "unlimited crafts, gardening, and growing plants, trips to the ecology centre, beach and woods visits, and baking." This thoughtful and responsive approach effectively promoted children's independence, and encouraged exploration and discovery within a child-led environment.

Child-centred planning reflected their current interests, and promoted children's engagement and motivation. We saw that children had developed close friendships as they worked together and made choices about their games. There was lots of laughter and fun as they played together. As a result, all children were highly engaged, and made use of the breadth of experiences across the indoor and outdoor environments.

Children's language and literacy development was very well supported in all activities. Staff were enthusiastic, down at children's level, and communicated very well which supported children's thinking. Children were actively involved in leading their play as they felt listened to and valued, as their choices were supported. This approach enabled children to develop and extend their games using their ideas, which led to a sense of achievement. Staff were skilled at knowing when to be involved in children's play, and when to observe. As a result, they knew children very well, which supported planning and identifying 'next steps' for learning.

Direct access to the outdoor area and wider community extended children's experiences. The relaxed and patient approach encouraged children to explore and learn about the natural environment. SIMOA (Safe, Inspect, Monitor, Observe and Act) had been used effectively to help children understand about risk. They confidently shared how they kept themselves safe, while taking risk in their play. We saw that children were learning life skills and becoming resilient as they had real life experiences. For example, they had such a sense of achievement when they mastered new skills as they explored the natural environment.

Planning, child friendly learning journals, observation and review helped monitor children's progress, development and learning. Along with parents, staff identified 'next steps' which supported children's continued progression. To build on current practice, we discussed how information about children's progress and achievements could be enhanced. The senior leadership team had already identified this as an area that could be improved. Developing these systems could strengthen the links between planning, floor books and journals, and further demonstrate children's progress.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the settings work, and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

The positive ethos created by staff meant that children and families experienced warm, nurturing and trusting relationships. Children had a sense of safety as they had developed close bonds to staff. They sought out familiar adults for affection and cuddles, and chatted about their interests with them. Parents shared that staff qualities included being "very professional, passionate, caring," and they "make sure that my child is happy and enjoying nursery."

Staff recognised the importance of partnership working and had built relationships with families. This enabled information to be shared, which helped staff get to know children and plan for their care. Children therefore experienced a consistent approach to their care as plans were tailored to meet their individual

needs. Parents confirmed they "have regular updates and opportunities to review learning plans and outcomes, as well as suggestions on things we can do at home to compliment learning objectives at nursery."

To promote positive outcomes for children, the service had developed partnership working with other agencies and services. This enabled consistent care for children as relevant information was shared. Where children had blended placements, staff and management team recognised the importance of working together. They were committed to further developing these relationships to promote effective communication.

Mealtimes were well organised for children. They supported independence as children were actively encouraged to make choices and develop self-help skills. They were confident with the routines as they ably served themselves and tidied up when finished eating. They were relaxed and sociable occasions for children as they chatted with staff and friends. In the event of staff absence, staff could consider their roles so that the established routine is maintained for children.

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 | 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 |

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