

# Avoch Primary Early Learning and Child Care Day Care of Children

Avoch Primary School  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
15 January 2026

**Service provided by:**  
Highland Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003001693

**Service no:**  
CS2003017171

## About the service

Avoch Early Learning and Child Care is a day care of children service situated in Avoch Primary School in the village of Avoch.

The service is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of 78 children aged three years to those attending primary school.

The service is situated in a residential area near shops, a beach and other amenities. The children are cared for in a purpose built extension to the school, with two playrooms and access to fully enclosed outdoor areas. Children can also access the main hall and a general purpose room in the adjoining primary school building.

## About the inspection

This was a follow up inspection which took place on Wednesday 14 January, between 12:30 and 16:30, and Thursday 15 January 20256 between 09:30 and 10.30 . The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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 children using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

## Key messages

- The service has begun to develop quality assurance systems. There is some emerging progress but this is at an early stage of development and is not yet driving consistent improvement.
- As a result, the timescale for the requirement has been extended to allow sufficient time for progress and implementation of processes which are robust, consistent and contributing to effective, sustained improvement.
- One area for improvement has been met.

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

## Requirements

### Requirement 1

By 12 January 2026, the provider must ensure that there are robust quality assurance processes and systems in place to monitor progress in making improvements, and ensuring that these are sustained.

To do this the provider must at a minimum ensure:

- a) Clear and effective plans are in place for maintaining and improving the service.
- b) The leadership team effectively monitors the work of each member of staff and the service as a whole.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 3 and Regulation 4(1)(a) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is in order to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, 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 requirement was made on 12 September 2025.

### Action taken on previous requirement

The service was in the early stages of developing and embedding quality assurance systems to support improvement to children's outcomes and experiences. There was some emerging progress. Further time is now needed to ensure processes are robust, consistent and contributing to effective, sustained

improvement. We acknowledged an unexpected change within the leadership team at the time of inspection. We noted that a temporary depute head teacher began their induction on the day we delivered our inspection feedback.

An action plan had been supplied. Its current design and implementation did not establish well defined measures of success, clear timescales to increase the pace of improvement, or provide transparent accountability for actions. This should be addressed to support leaders' ability to monitor progress and evaluate impact effectively. At this early stage of implementation, there was insufficient evidence that the plan was influencing practice or leading to improved outcomes.

To support sustained progress in improvements, clearer focus on key priorities is needed. For example, initial use of an audit tool to assess the quality of the indoor and outdoor environments provided a starting point. The service should now consider narrowing the scope of this tool to a small number of areas where it is most likely to achieve meaningful impact. We also suggested that using the tool alongside the early years best practice document, Realising the Ambition, would strengthen practice.

Staff had begun to use best practice guidance, such as Setting the Table, which had led to early improvements in children's lunchtime experiences. The introduction of an early language development tool was also beginning to support some reflective practice and initial engagement with self evaluation. To build on this progress, the leadership team should strengthen its role in supporting staff to develop their knowledge and skills in improvement processes. This should include self evaluation and opportunities for reflective discussion. The leadership team should also consider how regular observation of staff practice could more effectively inform and develop self evaluation within a continuous improvement cycle. Some monitoring activities were still at an early stage, which meant there was limited evidence of how changes were being evaluated for their impact.

The service had taken positive steps toward improvement, but further work was still required to achieve greater consistency and clearer accountability. Stronger links between priorities and practice were also needed so that developments continued to progress and improve outcomes for children. We will therefore extend the timescale of this requirement.

**This requirement has not been fully met and the timescale has been extended to 01 May 2026.**

**Not met**

**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 children to have their individual needs met effectively, the service should further develop their approach to identifying and sharing strategies with all staff.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) ensuring personal plans clearly set out children's current needs for individual care and support.
- b) ensuring strategies of support for individual children are developed and implemented by all staff
- c) ensuring all staff are knowledgeable and understand the information within the personal plans and use this to consistently meet each child's needs.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Care Inspectorate document 'Guide for providers on personal planning'.

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).

**This area for improvement was made on 12 September 2025.**

**Action taken since then**

This area for improvement was not assessed at this inspection.

**Previous area for improvement 2**

To enable children to receive consistent play, learning and development opportunities, which support them to reach their full potential. This should include, but is not limited to:

- a) Embedding meaningful literacy and numeracy experiences within play experiences and daily routines to support children's progression.
- b) Ensuring children experience high-quality interactions consistently to promote rich learning experiences and continuity of care.
- c) Reviewing and improving transitions throughout the day to minimise disruption to children's play and learning, particularly during adult-led routines.

This is 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 that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity" (HSCS 2.27).

**This area for improvement was made on 12 September 2025.**

**Action taken since then**

This area for improvement was not assessed at this inspection.

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## Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure children's privacy and wellbeing, the service should ensure that there are systems in place to ensure that all children's information is processed, managed and stored securely.

This should include but is not limited to ensuring that written documents correspond to the correct child's folder in learning journals.

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

"I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes" (HSCS 3.14) and,

"My environment is safe and secure." (HSCS 5.17)

**This area for improvement was made on 12 September 2025.**

### Action taken since then

This area for improvement was not assessed at this inspection.

## Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure that children are kept safe, the provider should make sure that arrangements are in place to maintain a safe environment. This should include but is not limited to increasing staff knowledge and understanding about risk assessing and taking appropriate action.

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

'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19).

**This area for improvement was made on 29 August 2024.**

### Action taken since then

Arrangements were in place to ensure that children were kept safe and healthy in relation to infection prevention control. Toilet doors opening into the playroom were closed over. This helped to reduce the risk of cross infection. Staff recognised children who needed support to access the toilets and provided this.

An additional measure to reduce the risk of cross-infection was to relocate the snack table away from the toilet doors, which further reduced the risk. This demonstrated staff knowledge and awareness of the key role played by infection prevention and control in reducing risk to keep children safe and healthy.

**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](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

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