

Ladyloan Pre School Class Day Care of Children

Ladyloan Primary School
Millgate Loan
Arbroath
DD11 1LX

Telephone: 01241 465 416

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
16 January 2026

Service provided by:
Angus Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000043

Service no:
CS2003016858

About the service

Ladyloan Pre School Class provides a daycare of children service in Arbroath, Angus. This is a local authority service who are registered to provide care to a maximum of 70 children at any one time aged 2 years to those not yet attending primary school of whom no more than 10 children shall be aged 2 to under 3 years.

The nursery is part of Ladyloan Primary School and consists of one large playroom, an outdoor space and toilet facilities. The nursery also has access to the gym hall within the main building.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 15 January 2026 between 08:50 and 16:20. Feedback was shared with the service on 16 January 2026.

The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with 41 children using the service
- received seven completed questionnaires from families
- spoke with staff and the management team
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- 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 cared for by a warm, caring, and nurturing staff team.
- The staff team recognised the importance of positive connections with children and families.
- Children took part in a broad range of play and learning experiences to develop curiosity, imagination and life skills.
- The service's approach to quality assurance and self-evaluation was having an impact on improving outcomes for children and families.
- Children experienced a welcoming, inviting, and well-resourced environment that reflected their current needs.

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	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 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator - Leadership and management of staff and resources

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.

The service's vision, values, and aims were consistently shared with families. Staff demonstrated a strong commitment to embedding these within daily play and learning experiences. Visual displays were used effectively to reinforce the values, and staff were further enhancing this through the creation of a values based video with children. This approach provided meaningful opportunities for children to express their understanding, and it contributed to a shared ethos across the setting. As a result, children and families demonstrated a shared understanding of the service's vision and values.

Robust self evaluation processes were in place and meaningfully involved children, staff, and families. A range of approaches, including observations, questionnaires, and audits of the environment and play experiences, supported staff to reflect on practice. Staff used observations of children's learning and regular audits of planning effectively to ensure that self evaluation considered children's needs, rights, and experiences. The service's approach to self evaluation had a positive impact on the quality of children's experiences and the continuous improvement of the setting.

An improvement plan identified priorities including enhancing communication through play and strengthening parental involvement. Staff spoke confidently about these priorities and had a good understanding of their role in driving improvement across the service. A quality assurance calendar clearly outlined key tasks and timescales, which supported staff to implement improvements consistently and monitor progress effectively. This resulted in a positive impact on outcomes for children and families.

Regular team meetings provided staff with the opportunity to raise issues, reflect on practice, and discuss improvements. Staff were enthusiastic about the changes they had made to the environment, and we observed these having a positive impact on children.

Risk assessments had been developed to identify any potential risks within the indoor and outdoor areas. These supported staff to be aware of risks and keep children safe. Careful positioning of resources is important to reduce the potential that children may be encouraged to climb fences. It was discussed with management that the school gate located next to the nursery garden, should be kept closed. As a result, this would minimise any potential risks and would support staff to keep children safe.

The training calendar, alongside mandatory learning, provided staff with a broad range of professional development opportunities. Staff reported feeling well supported, with one sharing, 'I feel that we are doing very well and continued staff training, enthusiasm and love for our children and our job will keep making our nursery even better.' Quality assurance processes and appraisals effectively identified targeted training needs. This approach was improving staff skills and confidence, which resulted in the service improving experiences for children.

Staff were passionate about their leadership roles and contributed to improvements in literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing. This collective approach fostered shared responsibility and strengthened leadership skills across the team. It also supported continuous improvement, increased family engagement, and enhanced connections within the local community.

Staff reported that they felt well supported and mentored throughout their induction. Management used the National Induction Resource effectively to support newly recruited staff. This ensured that staff had a good knowledge of policies which supported safe practice and understood what was expected of them within their roles. This resulted in a more competent and confident team.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality Indicator - 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.

Children were happy and were having fun. Children would benefit from consistent and purposeful interactions from staff. For example, staff should develop their awareness of all children within the nursery to ensure they are actively engaged in play. This would support them to motivate their interests within their play and learning.

Children took part in a range of quality play experiences which developed their curiosity, imagination, and creative skills. A parent shared, 'good range of activities and different spaces to explore.' Children spent extended periods of time in the construction area, home area, and creative space. Staff mostly interacted well with children and supported their play and learning experiences. Staff skills could be improved to ensure a consistent approach when extending children's play and learning. This would ensure that all children's needs were met, supported, and challenged and would promote positive outcomes for all.

Children had free flow access to outdoors throughout the day. A wide range of resources and play experiences were provided to develop independence and life skills. Children kept themselves safe while accessing tools at the workbench area and when using bikes and helmets. They developed critical thinking skills which supported them to place screws into pieces of wood. Children worked well together and took part in quality discussions while developing their learning during this play. As a result, children developed skills in problem solving and perseverance.

Group time provided focused learning opportunities to support children to progress and achieve. These groups focused on numeracy, literacy, mathematical language, and story sharing. Most children were actively engaged in these groups and staff were responsive to their learning needs. Strategies to support children to meaningfully engage in new experiences should be consistently used by all staff. This would ensure children felt safe and secure when transitioning between experiences. The service should be mindful of interrupting children's play experiences when asking them to tidy up prior to group time. This could impact on children returning to quality play and learning experiences. Staff could consider the timing of group times to ensure seamless transitions between children's experiences. As a result, children would benefit from quality learning.

Literacy and numeracy were naturally incorporated into children's play and learning experiences both indoors and outdoors. A range of resources and activities supported children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Most staff used strategies such as Board Maker and Makaton to support children's communication. Children would benefit from consistent use of strategies across all staff. This would ensure children's communication and wellbeing needs were effectively met.

Children's learning was recorded through online journals. These were used to gather observations and were created in partnership with families. A parent shared, 'I'm always keen to align with what our child is learning at the nursery and keen to know they are learning what I expect them to be learning.' Families had opportunities to comment on their child's nursery experiences. We highlighted that the quality of observations in the learning journals could be improved. We found that not all observations shared significant learning to support children to progress and achieve. Next steps could be further developed to ensure these were significant and enabled children to experience success. This would ensure that children's individual learning and development was meaningful.

Floor books recorded community learning, family engagement, and the child's voice. This supported children to revisit and discuss previous play and learning experiences. We suggested that staff consider how they identify and reflect on children's significant learning through their floor books. This would enable staff to ensure planning remained responsive and meaningful. This would value children's voice and contributions within their experiences.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator - Nurturing care and support

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.

Children experienced kind and warm interactions from staff. This valued nurturing relationships as essential for children's growth and development. One parent commented, 'my child loves going into nursery every day to see their friends and we always feel welcome.' As a result, children felt loved, safe, and secure.

Staff were proactive and worked well together to support children's needs. They were compassionate and aware of each other's wellbeing. This meant that children received the right support at the right time. For example, they recognised times of the day where children may require additional help, such as mealtimes. This enabled them to help children to regulate their emotions.

Mealtimes were relaxed and provided a positive experience for children. Staff sat with children and promoted conversations. This enabled children to further develop their social skills. Children's independence and choice was encouraged as they poured their own drinks, self-served at snack time, and washed their dishes. Staff were responsive to children during mealtimes and supported them to access this as their needs changed. This demonstrated that children's wellbeing was enhanced.

Children's wellbeing was supported through the effective use of personal plans. Staff worked in partnership with families to share information. One parent commented, 'staff are lovely and always taking time to give every detail of my child's day.' This gave a strong message that children's and families' views mattered. Where children had additional needs, we asked that staff ensured all strategies in place were up to date and recorded. This would ensure children's needs were consistently met.

Strong partnerships with families enriched children's experiences. Families were warmly welcomed into the service and had a variety of opportunities to be involved in their child's learning. This included stay and play sessions, walks, and story or singing activities. The lending library promoted early reading, language, and literacy at home. This demonstrated that families were valued as active participants in helping their children to grow and thrive.

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	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very 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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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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