

Valley Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Valley Gardens
Kirkcaldy
KY2 6BL

Telephone: 01592 583 467

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
5 February 2026

Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
SP2004005267

Service no:
CS2003015929

About the service

Valley Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 100 children at any one time, aged from 2 years to an age to attend primary school, of whom no more than 30 are aged 2 - 3 years.

The nursery is situated in Kirkcaldy, Fife and is close to local amenities including shops, parks and a woodland area. The nursery comprises of two buildings. One building accommodates the children under three years old and the second building contains two playrooms for the children aged from three years to five years old. All three playrooms have free flow access to outdoor play areas.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 4 February 2026 between 09:30 and 16:30 and 5 February 2026 between 09:30 and 14:00. This 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, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- Spent time with six children using the service and spoke with four families
- received three completed questionnaires from families
- spoke with 10 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

- The service had a clear set of visions, values, and aims which were understood and reflected in day-to-day practice.
- The service's "Valley Values" approach was well embedded, with children actively engaged in the language used to promote shared expectations.
- Most children were engaged in high-quality play experiences indoors, supported by resources that reflected their interests and encouraged exploration.
- Most children experienced warm, nurturing care from staff who knew them well and responded sensitively to their individual needs.
- Families were warmly welcomed into the service and had a variety of opportunities to be involved in their child's learning.

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	4 - Good

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

Leadership 4 - Good

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.

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The service had a clear set of visions, values, and aims which were understood and reflected in day-to-day practice. The service's "Valley Values" approach was well embedded, with children actively engaged in the language used to promote shared expectations. For example, children received recognition for demonstrating the service values, such as being kind to others in the playroom. This helped to create a positive, inclusive ethos where children felt valued and celebrated.

The service had a clear improvement plan, developed collaboratively with staff, which effectively guided ongoing development and reflected the specific needs of the nursery. Priorities identified were meaningful and beginning to have an impact. For example, staff were being supported to develop their skills to ensure they provided high-quality play experiences through skilled interactions. Staff and management had identified that staff interactions were not consistent across the whole staff team. This, at times lead to missed opportunities for some individual children.

Some quality assurance processes were in place and supported children's safety. For example, robust risk assessments, and regular reviews of accidents and incidents. This helped ensure staff could respond to or identify potential risks. Monitoring and auditing systems were not always effective, for example medication reviews. The service should continue to strengthen monitoring and auditing systems. For example, safe administration of medication and monitoring of staff interactions (see area for improvement 1).

An induction programme was in place to support new staff, some inductions were robust . However, not all staff inductions were consistently effective. To support a competent and skilled workforce, the management team should continue reviewing induction processes to make sure they are consistent and provide meaningful support to all staff.

Families received regular communication and opportunities to provide feedback through a range of methods, including newsletters and promoting parental partnership with a question of the month through a QR code. An open-door approach ensured families were welcomed in at drop-off and pick-up times. We observed positive, relaxed interactions between staff and parents. As a result, most families felt informed and involved in their child's experiences.

Areas for improvement

1. To strengthen leadership oversight and ensure consistently high-quality practice, the service should enhance systems for monitoring, supporting, and evaluating staff practice. This should include but not limited to:

- (a) monitoring of staff practice and interactions
- (b) strengthened quality assurance processes for medication management
- (c) robust and structured induction programme for all new and supply staff.

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

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

Children play and learn 4 - Good

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.

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

Children benefitted from responsive planning approaches which supported their interests and learning. Most staff responded well in the moment, adapting experiences to follow children's emerging ideas. For example, a small group of children were effectively supported by staff who encouraged them to develop their play ideas. As a result, children were able to be creative and remain absorbed in their play, deepened their problem solving and imaginative skills.

Children's play and learning were captured within their personal learning journeys. Children enjoyed sharing and used confidently to reflect on their previous experiences. Reviews had taken place with families, allowing achievements to be celebrated collaboratively between key workers and parents. While observations contained rich descriptions of children's interests, next steps were not consistently recorded. This meant opportunities to evidence progression and deepen learning were sometimes missed. Further developing this aspect of practice will help ensure children experience a clear sense of continuity and challenge in their learning.

Floor books were used effectively to celebrate children's learning and achievements. Children had the opportunity to add to these floor books, through discussions with staff, writing and mark making. Staff were reflective in their approaches throughout the service and made changes to help all children and families feel involved in play and learning. This meant children could revisit previous learning, connect with one another's ideas, and engage more deeply in shared learning experiences.

Most children were engaged in high-quality play experiences indoors, supported by resources that reflected their interests and encouraged exploration. Free flow outdoor learning opportunities were available throughout the day. On the second day of the inspection, additional resources had been provided which increased engagement and encouraged more children to choose outdoor play. The service had begun involving children in reviewing their play spaces. This meant that children had a sense of ownership and they felt valued.

Literacy and numeracy were naturally incorporated into children's play and learning experiences both indoors and outdoors. A range of activities supported children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Most staff used strategies such as board maker symbols and sign-a-long 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 are supported to achieve 4 - Good

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.

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

Most children experienced warm, nurturing care from staff who knew them well and responded sensitively to their individual needs. Most staff interactions were kind and respectful, which promoted children's sense of security and belonging. Children confidently sought out familiar staff for comfort and support, demonstrating the trusting relationships that had been established. A parent told us, "Nursery staff are amazing", and a parent shared " I can leave my [child] with ease they enjoy going which says a lot as they don't go anywhere without me" .

Children's wellbeing was effectively promoted through staff's careful and respectful attention to their personal care needs. Staff consistently sought children's permission before providing care, such as when wiping their faces after lunch, which supported children's dignity and choice. Staff also offered appropriate support when children were dressing for outdoor play, enabling them to participate fully and confidently in activities. As a result, children experienced warm interactions and developed increasing independence in managing their own care.

Children's health needs and wellbeing was supported through the use of personal plans. Plans contained relevant information about each child, including details of medical conditions and the involvement of other professionals. We highlighted to the service that they should ensure personal plan reviews are completed in line with best practice. This would further support staff in meeting children's individual needs.

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, bookbug sessions, 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.

Children had regular access to snack within the playroom, and most children were able to choose when to participate. This approach supported children to make independent choices, practice self-service, and build confidence in their self-help skills. Lunch was served in the school dining hall, offering a more structured experience. To further enhance children's wellbeing and continuity of care, the service should consider how lunchtime routines can be developed. This would ensure all children's mealtime experiences were relaxed, unhurried and promoted independence.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	4 - Good
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	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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