

Doodlebugs Day Nursery (Aberuthven) Day Care of Children

Main Street
Aberuthven
Auchterarder
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Telephone: 01764 662 266

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
29 January 2026

Service provided by:
Doodlebugs Day Nurseries Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2013012143

Service no:
CS2013319773

About the service

Doodlebugs Day Nursery (Aberuthven) provides a daycare of children service in Aberuthven in Perth and Kinross. The service are registered to provide care to a maximum of 74 children up to the age of eight years at any one time which includes; a maximum of 19 children aged under two years, a maximum of 21 children aged two to three years, a maximum of 34 children aged three to those not yet attending primary school of whom there can be a maximum of 10 children of primary school age up to the age of eight years.

The nursery consists of four playrooms over two levels. Each playroom has access to toilet or nappy changing facilities. One of the playrooms has a dedicated sleep room. A large, secure outdoor space provides a safe environment for children to play outdoors in all weathers.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 January 2026 between 08:45 and 16:30. Feedback was shared with the service on 29 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 38 children using the service
- received four completed questionnaires from families
- spoke with staff and the management team
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice in the playrooms
- 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, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvement is necessary within leadership.

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

- Staff knew children well and had developed positive relationships with them.
- The service were continuing to develop their approach to parental engagement to involve families in the life of the service.
- Quality assurance and self-evaluation processes should be further developed to ensure they are meaningful, evaluated and highlight the impact on outcomes for children and families.
- The service should develop their approach to child protection including training and processes to be followed if a concern arises. This would ensure that safeguarding needs were met.
- Planning processes should continue to be further developed and should include the recording of specific learning and next steps for children.
- Children were not consistently engaged in play experiences to support progression.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children play and learn	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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

Leadership 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality indicator - Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

The service's vision, values and aims had been reviewed within the last year. There was some evidence that families had been involved in consultations as part of this process. We observed that aspects of the service's values were being reflected in practice. Staff demonstrated nurturing approaches and provided creative experiences for children, which reflected some aspects of the service's vision and values. It would be beneficial for the staff team to fully reflect each of the four values into practice.

Quality assurance and self-evaluation systems were not yet robust or effective and had little impact on the quality of service for children and families. An improvement plan was in place with priorities focused on planning, child and family engagement, and supporting children's emotional development. The service was beginning to make some progress in these areas and were beginning to identify further areas to be developed. A quality assurance calendar supported ongoing audits and monitoring. However, these were basic and lacked the depth needed to reliably identify errors, gaps or emerging risks, particularly in relation to management of medication. Monthly self-evaluation of personal care and mealtimes helped promote some consistency. Peer monitoring was beginning to take place to support consistency and reflection within the staff team. Wider monitoring of staff practice, play spaces and children's experiences was in the early stages, but had not yet been fully developed. Feedback from families was regularly requested which included them in the service's self-evaluation process. Self-evaluation activities were not routinely revisited to assess progress or evaluate impact. This resulted in improvements not being sustained or embedded. Strengthening these processes could support more consistent practice, enhance staff reflection, and lead to improved daily experiences and outcomes for children and families. (See area for improvement one.)

Additional training packs had been created to support the established induction process. However, these were not yet being used and were not having an impact on staff practice. We signposted the service to the 'Early learning and childcare: national induction resource' to further support the induction of staff. This could support consistency of practice, develop staff knowledge and skills and lead to improved outcomes for children.

Although staff ratios were maintained, minimal staffing meant that the deployment impacted on quality of children's experiences and interactions. This resulted in some staff being task focused particularly over busier periods of the day. Improved deployment could enable staff to spend more quality time engaging with children.

The service's child protection procedures were aligned with current national guidance, however, these were not consistently followed. The child protection policy and/or whistleblowing policy should include how to appropriately manage potential allegations of staff misconduct. The service should familiarise themselves with the 'National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023' document to support their knowledge and the review of policies. Staff were confident in recording significant events in a child's life in their individual chronologies. It would be beneficial for further staff training to be incorporated into the training plan to develop staff knowledge and skills to support them to keep children safe. (See area for improvement two.)

Annual supervision and monitoring meetings, alongside regular check-ins, were beginning to support staff to reflect on strengths and development needs. This helped staff and management to identify potential training needs to develop practice. A staff member shared, 'I feel extremely valued as a member of staff and confident about speaking to management.' Approaches such as employee of the month and two stars and a wish ensured staff felt valued and respected as a staff team.

Areas for improvement

1. To promote consistent high quality practice the provider should ensure that quality assurance and self-evaluation processes are further developed. This should include, but is not limited to:

a) audits being further developed to ensure they are effective and robust to identify errors, missing information and patterns or triggers. This is in relation to accidents and incidents and the safe management of medication;

b) developing effective and well managed quality assurance and self-evaluation processes including monitoring of practice, interactions, spaces and children's experiences. These should be meaningful, evaluated and highlight the impact on outcomes for children and families.

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

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

2. To ensure children are kept safe from harm and abuse, the provider should develop the service's child protection policy to keep it in line with 'National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023.' This should include, but is not limited to:

a) ensuring that processes and procedures are clear and consistently followed;

b) ensuring clear guidance on how to effectively manage allegations made in relation to a staff member;

c) ensuring concerns recorded in children's chronologies are acted upon;

d) ensuring all staff have received additional child protection training to develop their knowledge and skills to support them to recognise signs of abuse and keep children safe.

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

'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

Children play and learn 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality indicator - Play, learning and developing

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

Children were happy and confident within their play spaces, with older children keen to share their stories with us. This demonstrated that they felt safe, secure, and comfortable in their environment. Staff felt they had developed close bonds with children which supported interactions and engagement in play. Children were mostly encouraged to lead their own play and explore their interests, which supported the development of independence and fine motor skills, for example, when using tweezers to pick up feathers. Some children were engaged in developing their imaginative play with peers and this was supported by staff. While there were some opportunities for children to revisit experiences, this was not consistent. Areas were often tidied away between experiences, which disrupted children's play. As a result, there were missed opportunities for children to sustain their interests, deepen their learning, and build on previous experiences.

Children had the opportunity to play outdoors in all weathers and were involved in risk assessing the outdoor play space. A parent commented, 'The outdoor space is such a nice environment for the kids to enjoy and again something my child loves.' Staff should be mindful of transitions to the outdoors. Older children became frustrated as they were having to wait around for periods of time. Not all younger children who wanted to go outside were given the opportunity to access the outdoor area. The indoor environment was tidied prior to children going outdoors. This resulted in children not being able to return to their previous play and learning experiences. Some children were cold and shivering while outdoors. Management should ensure that staff and children are appropriately clothed.

Children's early literacy skills were being supported through action songs, interactive story sharing and routine-based songs. Staff were developing leadership roles around communication, with knowledge and skills emerging to strengthen consistent practice across the setting. However, the frequent use of songs to signal routine changes interrupted older children's play on several occasions. This limited their ability to sustain deep engagement and impacted the flow of their learning. Further development of communication including a review of routine-based cues would help create more uninterrupted, meaningful play experiences for children.

Planning was mostly adult-led, which limited children's opportunity to influence their learning experiences. The service had identified a priority within their improvement plan to focus on increasing opportunities for child-led learning. We would support this as it would help to meaningfully value children's contributions. Strengthening the use of observations to inform planning would help ensure that learning experiences were more responsive to children's interests.

Observations and next steps were recorded using an online platform; however, their quality and focus were inconsistent, which meant children's significant learning was not always well captured. The service used the Perth and Kinross Council tracking tool to monitor children's progress. Tracking had supported the service to identify a gap in children's emotional literacy which was now in the early stages of being developed. There were long gaps between identifying children's next steps, which resulted in limited evidence of progress or

evaluation of learning. As a result, children were not consistently supported to build on their skills or make continuous progress in their learning and development. (See area for improvement one.)

Floorbooks effectively highlighted children's experiences and captured their voices and developing skills. It would be beneficial for these to be reviewed more frequently, which would provide valuable opportunities for children to revisit and build on their previous learning. More regular evaluation of children's learning, along with identifying next steps within play, could support children to make ongoing progress.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children experience high quality learning and development, the provider should ensure that a balance of intentional and responsive planning is offered. Observations should be effective and clearly identify progress and next steps within a child's learning. Next steps should be developed and regularly revisited to support further progression and achievement.

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

'I am supported to achieve my potential in my education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27).

Children are supported to achieve 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality indicator - Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

A welcoming environment was provided for children and families. Parents were invited into the nursery at drop off and pick up times which provided the opportunity for sharing information. A parent shared, 'It has a real family feel. The staff team are so lovely and welcoming and always make my child feel at home.' Children's artwork was displayed in the rooms along with photographs of family which supported children to feel valued and respected.

Staff knew children well and were mostly responsive to their needs. A parent shared, 'I feel very reassured leaving my child in the care of this service. The staff know them well, support their development, and genuinely care about their wellbeing.' Children were offered cuddles when upset and comforters when needed. Children would have benefited from more consistent quality interactions as staff were often task-focused. This meant children did not always receive the sustained, responsive engagement to fully meet their needs throughout the day.

Mealtimes offered valuable opportunities for some children to develop independence and life skills; however, this was not yet consistent across all age groups. For example, younger children did not have the opportunity to self-serve or help to prepare snack. A parent shared, 'I love the variety of healthy snacks and home cooked lunches on offer daily.' While staff sat with children in some rooms, this practice did not happen consistently, which reduced opportunities for social interaction, role modelling, and nurturing support. At times, staff were task focused rather than supporting children effectively. As a result, the quality of children's mealtime experiences varied, and some children did not have opportunities to develop practical life skills. Effective monitoring of children's mealtime experiences could ensure that positive relationships, independence and a relaxed social experience were promoted for all.

Staff knew the care and support needs, preferences and routines for the majority of the children attending. However, written personal planning information was inconsistent. Most personal plans were reviewed with parents and we identified where further monitoring would ensure that information gathered was effectively used to fully meet children's needs. Some plans lacked sufficient detail to clearly outline the strategies being used to support children's learning and achievements. The 'We know our children well' documents offered a helpful overview of each child, supporting staff to respond to their individual needs. Ensuring all personal plans were regularly reviewed and contained clear, up-to-date strategies could better support children's progress, consistency of care, and overall wellbeing.

While medication systems were generally effective, important gaps in documentation meant that practice did not fully reflect current best practice guidance. Medication was stored safely and long-term medication was being reviewed with parents every 28 days. The service should be mindful of current best practice guidance to ensure they hold all required information. This would include prescription labels to make sure they were meeting the health and wellbeing needs of all children.

All nappy changing areas were now ventilated, which supported improved infection control. Staff followed infection control procedures and engaged warmly with children during personal care. However, privacy and dignity were compromised in toilet areas due to toilet doors in two of the rooms being propped open for periods of time. This included when meals were being served. Management shared that these doors were open due to their heavy weight. We asked them to consider alternatives to protect children's privacy, dignity and wellbeing and maintain effective infection prevention and control.

Parental engagement was developing through termly stay and play sessions. This included a recent creative workshop that encouraged parents to participate in their child's learning. A parent commented, 'I attended a lovely stay and play and made a calendar with my child. A core memory.' Open evenings were offered throughout the year. These provided valuable opportunities for parents to talk with keyworkers and share updates about their child's needs, and progression within their play and learning. Parents were also welcomed into the community through events such as the nursery nativity in the local hall. As a result, parents were increasingly involved in their children's experiences and had more meaningful opportunities to build positive relationships with staff.

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's health and wellbeing, the provider and manager should ensure that effective infection prevention and control practices are in place for children.

This should include but is not limited to:

- reviewing and making changes to nappy changing facilities.

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

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 11 July 2023.

Action taken since then

The service have made changes to nappy changing facilities including providing ventilation in each of the changing areas.

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.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Leadership and management of staff and resources	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children play and learn	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Playing, learning and developing	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Children are supported to achieve	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Nurturing care and support	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

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