

North Queensferry Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

The Brae
North Queensferry
Inverkeithing
KY11 1JH

Telephone: 01383 602 425

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 February 2026

Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
SP2004005267

Service no:
CS2003017103

About the service

North Queensferry Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 24 children aged from 3 years to an age to attend primary school.

The service operates from a purpose-built nursery facility on the grounds of North Queensferry Primary School. Children are cared for across the ground floor playroom with a secure outdoor play area and access to the school dining hall. It is situated within the village of North Queensferry in Fife. The service is close to parks, beaches, shops, transport links and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 17 February 2026 between 09:30 and 16:00, and Wednesday 18 February 2026 between 08:40 and 12:00. 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, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluations we:

- spoke/spent time with children using the service
- received five completed questionnaires from families
- received two completed questionnaires from staff members
- spoke to staff and the management team
- observed interactions, routines, practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.

As part of this inspection, we assessed 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.

Key messages

- Children's confidence and motivation was supported by strong values-based practice.
- Some policies would benefit from being reviewed to reflect the service context.
- Children's play was purposeful and enriched by environments that stimulated curiosity and imagination.
- Parents spoke about the staff team's passion for children's learning and about quality interactions supporting their children.
- Children had a strong sense of security through well-established routines and predictability.
- Children's health and wellbeing were well supported through regular outdoor play and community experiences.

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	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 4 - Good

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

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.

The service vision and values were displayed and meaningfully shaped the atmosphere across the setting. The service values - respectful, determined and ambitious - were consistently reflected in staff practice, contributing to a genuinely warm and nurturing environment. A parent's description of a "welcoming environment with nurturing staff" confirmed what we observed. Staff made deliberate, thoughtful choices in how they designed spaces and experiences. This had a clear impact on children's sense of security, confidence and motivation in their play. To strengthen this rights-based practice further, we encouraged staff to use values-based language directly with children. This would support children to understand the positive values they experience in the moment and build a clearer sense of themselves as capable learners.

The service was exploring ways to deepen partnerships with families. For example families were invited to give feedback in a questionnaire. Using the vision, values and aims as a tool for sharing successes and inviting feedback would help families feel more involved in their children's learning.

Staff reported feeling fully involved in evaluating the service and shaping future priorities. This reflected a strong culture of collaboration. The shared approach supported improvement, such as the recent enhancements to the outdoor play area. These changes have had a positive effect on children's experiences, offering richer opportunities for exploration, physical activity and imaginative play. Families told us they would like continued development of the outdoor area. Options for summer shade were discussed with leaders to strengthen the outdoor environment even further.

The service improvement plan showed alignment with whole-school priorities, particularly in literacy, numeracy and digital learning. A parent said: "Having had a child previously attend I can see that the nursery has worked hard to offer an excellent variety of activities for the children." Engaging tools such as cameras and Beebots supported the development of problem-solving and creativity. Leaders spoke about a future digital safety input for families to further strengthen children's wellbeing.

A clear quality assurance calendar supported staff to manage key tasks throughout the year. Children's safety and wellbeing was maintained through regular checks, such as reviewing medication procedures, policies and risk assessments. Strengthening the analysis of accidents and incidents would build on the identification of any patterns, ensuring children's experiences remain safe and responsive to their needs.

A range of policies issued by the local authority supported the service with their procedures and practice. Some policies would benefit from being reviewed to reflect the nursery's context, including clearer staff roles in areas such as child protection and accident auditing. Where appropriate, referring to Care Inspectorate guidance and best practice guidance consistently would further support staff and strengthen policies.

Staff recruitment, induction and training were strong, contributing to a confident and capable team. Ongoing discussion of child protection at staff meetings contributed to staff knowledge of procedures.

We encouraged the use of anonymised scenarios during meetings to raise staff confidence when child protection concerns arise. All staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). Leaders were advised to monitor the SSSC records of staff members to ensure information was kept up-to-date.

The service was committed to promoting diversity and inclusion making all children feel included. Staff encouraged the sharing of home languages, used Signalong and planned cultural festivals intentionally. Further development of a culturally rich environment will deepen children's sense of belonging and broaden their understanding of the world.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

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.

Children's confidence and sustained engagement was supported across a wide range of play experiences indoors, outdoors, and within the local community. Their play was purposeful and enriched by environments that stimulated curiosity and imagination. Children's learning was embedded in meaningful ways through staff observation and the responsive planning cycle. For example, children's interest in objects that stick led to planned opportunities to explore magnetism. This was supported by a record of the child voice and identified next steps. A parent commented on this rich learning for their child: "The staff work together with the children to develop topics of investigation that are of interest to the children and are led by them. Recently they have been looking at magnetism which was sparked by a child's interest."

Learning spaces were well organised and intentionally designed to promote independence, choice and creativity. Open ended natural materials supported children's numeracy, problem-solving and imaginative play. Numeracy was meaningfully embedded in routines, with staff confidently modelling counting, patterning and early mathematical language. Children's learning was individualised and deepened through consistent adult interactions. Overall, the learning environment contributed significantly to positive outcomes for children.

Literacy and language development were effectively supported through storytelling, singing and rich conversational interactions. The chosen story of the week, 'Jack and the Beanstalk', provided a shared literacy focus that children engaged with enthusiastically. Staff planned opportunities for children to retell and adapt the story, strengthening narrative skills. A literacy and communication tree shared with families helped highlight the importance of early literacy skills. We encouraged the service to continue strengthening family understanding of pre-reading and pre-writing development.

Staff interactions were warm, responsive and grounded in a mindful approach. Child's confidence as learners was supported in the moment through focussing on their interests and curiosities. Children's thinking was deepened as staff used open-ended questioning and 'wondering aloud.' One parent told us their child: "has opportunities to direct their own learning, but is also regularly challenged to explain what they are doing and to try new things." Children were secure, absorbed in their play and supported by a stable, skilled staff team who demonstrated strong knowledge of child development. Parents spoke about the staff team's passion for children's learning and quality interactions supporting their children.

Planning reflected children's interests and developmental stages, with clear links between observations, next steps and tracking documentation. Staff showed a strong understanding of progression in play and learning. Increasing family involvement by sharing observations more regularly and inviting parent and child voice into learning observations would strengthen planning for the learning community.

Equity of learning was supported through staff auditing play opportunities for all children. We discussed attention to gender neutral language to further extend this approach.

Children's learning was enriched through strong connections with the local community. Regular visits to the play park, beach and local shop, as well as recycling activities and fruit picking in the school garden, provided meaningful real world learning. These experiences supported children to develop a sense of responsibility, environmental awareness and belonging within their community. A minibus available through the high school community was used effectively to widen learning opportunities. Children spoke enthusiastically about being on the minibus for exciting learning opportunities. Children were kept safe on outings through careful risk assessment and planning. During inspection we saw the needs of newly settled children sensitively considered to access a community walk.

Overall, children experienced high quality play and learning that was well planned and developmentally informed. Strong relationships and community connections enriched children's learning and play.

Children are supported to achieve **5 - Very Good**

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

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.

Children's wellbeing was consistently supported through warm, nurturing, and responsive care. Staff had established strong, respectful relationships with children and demonstrated a highly attentive understanding of their individual needs. A parent told us: "All the staff are very caring. It's like being part of a family." As a result, children were confident in seeking help, showing clear trust in the adults around them. This contributed to children being happy, settled, and having good relationships with staff and each other.

Well established routines provided children with a strong sense of security and predictability. Children demonstrated confidence in the daily flow, which supported their independence and skills development. Transitions were thoughtfully planned and tailored to individual needs, and parents spoke highly of the settling process. We found that within children's personal planning, transition strategies required more consistent recording. This would ensure valuable learning from previous transitions is captured for future reference.

Personal planning supported children's wellbeing, although reviews with families mainly focused on updates to contact details. This resulted in some missed opportunities to capture changes in children's needs and preferences. Information from parents was recorded in communication logs. Some of this information should be transferred into children's personal plans. Staff and leaders were committed to developing personal planning. We saw significant strengths in additional support planning for some children. Detailed observations and tailored strategies enabled children to thrive with confidence and self awareness.

Children's health and wellbeing were well supported through regular outdoor access in all weathers. The free flow approach between indoors and outdoors promoted choice, independence, and physical wellbeing. Children were meaningfully involved in assessing risk, particularly outdoors. Robust risk assessments were in place and regularly reviewed. Staff used the guidance 'Keeping children safe: Look, Think, Act campaign' (Care Inspectorate, 2021) to raise awareness of children's safety. SIMOA the elephant mascot empowered children to contribute to their own safety.

Mealtime experiences were positive, social, and promoted independence. Children confidently self served, cleared dishes, and engaged in relaxed conversation with staff, who modelled healthy eating and social behaviours. A tablecloth and flowers created a homely, valued experience. While most families were satisfied with meal provision from the local authority, a small number expressed concerns about processed foods. Leaders discussed supporting parents to express their views around meals. Staff were aware of the best practice guidance 'Setting the Table' (Scottish Government, 2024) and identified developing a healthy packed lunch statement to support families. This would develop partnership working with families related to healthy eating. Children's allergies, dietary needs, and medication were managed effectively, ensuring safety and inclusion.

Strong connections with families contributed to positive outcomes for children. The nursery was inclusive and welcoming, with daily opportunities for meaningful communication with families. Parent comments told us that staff were always available to give updates on the children's experiences. Parents valued regular verbal and written updates, including on the Seesaw app and in newsletters. The strong link between home and the nursery gave children security as adults worked together to care for them.

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	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - 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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iarrrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.