

# Kinellar Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Kinellar Primary School  
Fintray Road  
Kinellar  
Aberdeen  
AB21 0SS

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
11 March 2026

**Service provided by:**  
Aberdeenshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000029

**Service no:**  
CS2003016315

## About the service

Kinellar Primary School Nursery is a day care of children service. They are registered to provide care to a maximum of 48 children at any one time. The age range will be from two years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is delivered from Kinellar Primary School, which is in Blackburn, Aberdeenshire and provided by Aberdeenshire Council. It is close to local amenities such as shops and play areas. Children are cared for in a large room within the primary school. They have direct access to an outdoor play area from the room. They also have access to a sensory room, library and gym hall within the school.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10 March 2026 between the times of 08:30 and 17:40 and the 11 March between the times of 08:30 and 17:30. 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 children using the service and spoke to three of their parents/carers
- received 16 completed questionnaires from staff and parents/carers
- spoke with staff and the management team
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and children's experiences
- 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

- Leaders have created a clear vision and strong values that foster a positive culture, support continuous improvement, and encourage meaningful engagement with children, families, and staff.
- Children benefit from a warm, well organised learning environment where engaging interactions and varied experiences promote curiosity, creativity and confidence.
- To further improve outcomes, staff should consistently identify next steps in learning and strengthen play provocations to enhance depth and progression.
- Children experienced warm, nurturing relationships that promoted their wellbeing, security and growing independence.
- Effective routines and staff interactions supported children's safety, engagement and positive daily 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	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

### 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.

Leaders had established a clear and shared vision, values and aims which reflected the ethos of the setting. These were visible throughout the environment and understood by families, who confirmed that the statement continued to represent their aspirations for children. This supported a shared understanding of what the service aimed to achieve and gave families confidence to contribute their views. The service had begun to consider age-appropriate ways to gather children's perspectives, which has the potential to strengthen children's influence on future developments.

The values of Happiness, Achievement, Nurture and Kindness were well embedded in practice. We observed warm, respectful interactions which demonstrated these values in action and contributed to a positive, caring culture. Children's rights were central to the service's approach, reflected in policies and personal plans, and used to guide practice.

Children and families benefitted from an ethos of continuous improvement. Leaders had established quality assurance processes which supported regular reflection and improvement. A quality assurance calendar was in place and responsibilities were distributed across the team, contributing to a manageable and team wide approach. Staff used audits effectively to identify both immediate improvements and longer-term developments. This resulted in prompt "quick fixes", such as ensuring resources were consistently available, which supported children's experiences throughout the day.

Parents told us they felt meaningfully involved in the development of the service through opportunities such as stay-and-play sessions and open communication with staff. This strengthened family engagement and helped ensure changes were informed by lived experiences.

The recording of reviews and evaluations following changes was inconsistent. This created gaps in evidence of progress and limited leaders' ability to monitor the impact of improvements. Strengthening the recording of review processes would ensure outcomes are tracked, sustained, and shared with families to celebrate progress. The manager had also recognised that quality assurance documentation should now be updated to reflect the new national framework to promote consistency moving forward.

Recruitment processes followed safe recruitment guidance and staff were registered appropriately with professional bodies. The manager valued staff retention and recognised the impact of staff stability on children's attachments and continuity of care. Induction procedures were thorough and based on national guidance. A tailored approach supported relief staff and those returning from extended absence, helping ensure staff felt confident in their role and able to meet children's needs effectively.

New staff benefitted from mentoring by experienced colleagues, which helped build confidence and ensured consistent practice. Staff described feeling part of a supportive team. Opportunities for professional networking, such as visits to other settings, had recently been developed to strengthen professional learning and share effective practice.

**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 experienced a warm, engaging learning environment. Staff had a good understanding of child development and used this effectively to support children's progress. Staff interactions demonstrated appropriate expectations of children's learning, contributing to children being motivated, curious and confident in their play. Children were observed to be busy, purposeful and deeply engaged in a range of indoor and outdoor experiences, which supported creativity and problem-solving.

A balance of planned and responsive experiences supported children's imagination and creativity. For example, storytelling, water play and potion-making were thoughtfully facilitated by staff. However, on some occasions, children's independent play was disrupted when adults left the activity, which limited the continuity of thinking and depth of learning. Staff should continue to develop a consistent approach to ending interactions to ensure learning is sustained.

Children benefitted from stimulating outdoor play that followed their interests, such as using bikes and exploring open-ended materials creatively. To extend children's ownership and leadership of play, opportunities to involve them in planning outdoor experiences could be extended. For example, encouraging them to decide on the routes they would use and make signs for this.

Indoor and outdoor environments were mostly well-organised and resourced, allowing children to access materials independently. This encouraged choice and autonomy. Some areas, such as the home corner, were less inviting and offered limited provocation for deeper play. Continued development of these spaces will support richer learning opportunities.

Staff interactions were warm, responsive and respectful. They were skilled at using language to extend thinking, with rich opportunities for literacy and numeracy observed through stories, conversations, measuring activities and use of resources such as Numicon. Most children were able to sustain engagement and follow their own pace of learning, supported by a calm approach that avoided unnecessary interruption. Staff recognised when to step in to support and when to give children time and space to develop skills independently. Some staff demonstrated particularly strong skills in extending thinking, while others would benefit from further modelling and professional learning to ensure consistency.

Digital technologies were used meaningfully to deepen children's learning. Children used iPads to record investigations, revisit ideas, and explore personal interests with staff encouragement. This supported children to develop confidence and ownership over their learning.

Planning approaches were both intentional and responsive. Staff used observations well to capture children's experiences, with a balance of individual and group learning recorded. However, next steps were not consistently identified, which limited the ability to plan for progression in learning. Staff were reviewing their use of floorbooks, and further development of these will strengthen children's voice and make learning more visible.

Parents told us they felt well informed about their children's learning through Learning Journals, meetings, Sway updates and opportunities to discuss progress. This contributed to positive relationships and a shared understanding of children's development.

Overall, children experienced high quality interactions and a learning environment that supported curiosity, creativity and confidence. To further improve outcomes, a more consistent approach to identifying next steps and enhancing play provocations is needed.

## Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

### Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

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 experienced warm, nurturing relationships that supported their wellbeing and sense of security. Staff knew children well and confidently discussed their individual needs and strategies used to support them. Interactions were affectionate and responsive, helping children feel safe expressing their emotions. Children naturally sought comfort from familiar staff, who provided reassurance in ways that reflected individual preferences.

Staff promoted children's understanding of their own and others' safety through consistent messages and gentle reminders. This contributed to a calm environment where children moved confidently and developed social and emotional regulation skills through positive, trusting relationships.

Transitions were managed effectively, helping children feel settled and secure. Enhanced support was provided when needed, including for children moving on to primary one. Daily arrival and departure routines were well organised, allowing staff to share meaningful information with parents. Families told us they felt well informed and valued the communication they received.

Children were encouraged to develop independence in dressing, toileting, and handwashing. Staff supported children sensitively while maintaining privacy and dignity, strengthening children's confidence and self-help skills.

Mealtimes were relaxed and sociable, supporting positive relationships and healthy routines. Nutritious foods were provided, and staff used these times to encourage communication and social interaction. Children had access to fresh drinking water throughout the day.

Staff deployment generally supported safe supervision and positive interactions. Children felt confident seeking help, and staff responded promptly. However, on a few occasions, support for individual children was passed between adults, interrupting continuity of care. A more consistent approach would further strengthen children's sense of security.

Daily routines were predictable and helped children feel confident. One late day routine resulted in an extended gathering time for some children, reducing engagement. Reviewing this routine would help ensure all children remain involved in meaningful play.

Medication was managed safely overall, though minor recording errors were identified and addressed during the inspection. Clear and accurate record keeping remains essential to ensuring children's needs are consistently met and reviews are not missed.

Personal plans reflected children's needs and followed national guidance. They were reviewed with parents,

though some review dates were unclear. A few plans did not fully capture staff's detailed knowledge or provide the level of specificity needed for consistent support across the team. Strengthening clarity in these plans will help secure positive outcomes for children.

Chronologies were used appropriately to document contact with other agencies and support families in accessing help. Staff communicated well with each other to adjust support throughout the day.

Positive relationships had been developed with families. Parents described staff as approachable and supportive. Stay and play sessions, newsletters and social media supported communication, though parental engagement varied. Staff were evaluating which approaches were most effective. Digital observations helped parents understand their child's learning, and families were encouraged to share experiences from home.

## 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).

## 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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