

# Linkwood Nursery Day Care of Children

Linkwood Primary School  
Thistle Drive  
Elgin  
IV30 8AS

Telephone: 01343 547453

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
18 March 2022

**Service provided by:**  
The Moray Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003001892

**Service no:**  
CS2020379781

## About the service

The service was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 16 March 2021

Linkwood Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 56 children aged from 3 years up to primary school age at any one time.

The service operates from purpose built premises that is on one level and has an open plan play room that has direct access to a secure outdoor play area. It is located in an urban area on the outskirts of Elgin.

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 15 March 2022. Two inspectors carried out the inspection. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered through the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with three children using the service and 11 parents;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection, we took into consideration Key Question 5 - Operating an early learning and childcare setting (including out of school care and childminders) during Covid-19 with a specific focus on Quality indicator 5.2: Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff. We will report on the overall performance of this indicator in Theme 1 Quality Care and Support.

## What people told us

During the inspection children told us that they liked nursery and it was fun. A child told us that they liked the cheese and crackers they were having for snack and a child playing in the house corner told us that they were making bread for the pizza.

Parents told us that they were really happy with the service. The staff were very approachable and made it easy to ask questions and the manager was also quick to respond to any queries. The communication was really good and this had helped their child to settle and enjoy their time at nursery. They had seen their child become confident and develop skills which was lovely to see and enabled them to have trust in the staff and to know their child was safe.

## Self assessment

Not requested

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	5 - Very Good
Quality of environment	5 - Very Good
Quality of staffing	5 - Very Good
Quality of management and leadership	5 - Very Good

## Quality of care and support

### Findings from the inspection

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Children had formed positive and nurturing relationships with staff that helped them to feel cared for and safe. Staff responded sensitively to a child that was feeling overwhelmed, their calm and mindful approach helped the child to manage their emotions and settle back into play. We saw that children were happy and confident as they moved around the play areas independently. They made free choices in their play both indoors and outdoors and led their own learning where they were able to explore and investigate. Forest sessions and ready access to activities such as woodwork, also helped children to participate in risky play that helped them to build resilience and manage risk.

Children had made real life connections with toy bears that represented the wellbeing indicators known as SHANARRI (the basic requirements that all children need to grow and develop - Getting It Right For Every Child). The bears represented each indicator and we saw that children had Safe Sam and Responsible Robby watching over them when sawing at the wood working bench.

The manager and staff recognised the benefits of partnership working with parents. Parents had been involved in the creation and review of their child's personal plan to identify needs such as health, care routines and likes/dislikes. The manager and staff had worked closely with families and other professionals, where additional support was needed. A meaningful understanding of how early experiences impacted on children meant that early intervention was advocated in the service. This practice aligned with Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) to help children have the best start in life. Parents told us how staff had shared practices used in the nursery to support their child and how it had helped them at home to overcome their fears/anxieties. They also told us about the help of staff when difficulties had arisen in the family and how they had really appreciated the flexibility and practical support given to them and their child. Professionals told us that communication between them and the service was regular and useful and that staff worked with and adapted strategies well. Families had spoken with them about the support and accessibility of the staff and manager.

Families were also invited to share in their child's learning and progress that promoted interaction and mutual development. Parents told us that they were really happy with the different forms of communication such as e-mail, short conversations at hand over of their child and regular updates on the class Dojo.

We were satisfied that the service had appropriate infection control procedures in place to support a safe environment for children. Such as, children and staff washing their hands well and established cleaning routines.

Children sat in small groups for lunch within the playroom. It was a pleasant, calm and positive experience that was well supported by staff who sat with the children and offered support to encourage good eating habits. A set rolling menu provided healthy options and complied with dietary needs and/or food preferences.

Staff had an understanding of child protection procedures as a result of training that contributed to the safeguarding of children. Chronologies were in place and used for the purposes of monitoring and assessment, to help children with the right support at the right time. Documentation and the storage of medication supported the safe administration of medication. However, we advised the manager that all information should be consistently recorded and reviewed as stated in the guidance.

Ref: <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/1549/management-of-medication-in-daycare-of-children-and-childminding.pdf>

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of environment

### Findings from the inspection

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

The premises, equipment and furnishings were well maintained, clean and free from hazards. Staff had completed first aid training so that children were treated appropriately should an accident occur. Accidents and incidents were being appropriately recorded and information was shared with the parent/carer, that helped with the relationship of respect and trust.

The spacious, open, bright playroom was well-organised with a variety of areas laid out including a role play home area, a tent, a cosy corner with sofa, block-building construction area and a messy play area. Furniture was made of natural wood as were many toys. Children were able to self-select materials and toys they wanted to use. These were easily accessible from shelving and units. The children had space to play in small groups and move freely as they played.

The cloakroom was situated in a wide corridor where children's clothing, shoes and bags were well-organised and tidy. Outdoor waterproof suits were easily accessible to each child, encouraging independence in changing for outdoor /indoor play.

We observed children accessing the outdoor area via a door from the cloakroom. During the inspection we spoke with the manager about children being able to access the outdoor area directly from the playroom. There was an issue with the safe opening and closing of the full-length glass doors which the manager was working with the local authority to resolve. We consider an ease of access would encourage all children to benefit from outdoor play experiences.

Opportunities for the children to play physically, imaginatively and creatively in the outdoor area had been well planned and organised. Physical development, including fine and gross motor skills were promoted in areas such as the large sandpit, shelter area with woodwork bench and loose parts. We observed children making use of the literacy shed, selecting spray paint guns and brushes. Independence and self-selection of resources were encouraged. The large storage shed was open for children to choose the resources they wanted to use. The area was landscaped to include wide, fine gravel paths suitable for bikes and scooters. There were also grassy areas arranged in little hills and dips. A child-height outdoor tap allowed children to access water freely for their play. One group were using water in the mud-kitchen to make potions. We spoke with the manager about the further development of literacy and numeracy activities and loose parts within the outdoor area to increase learning opportunities.

Staff were aware that the numbers of children were due to increase and the indoor and outdoor spaces would continue to be developed, so that the quality of play experiences were maintained.

Planned weekly visits enabled children to access and learn about the wider environment such as nearby woods. Children not attending on Outdoor Fridays had opportunities for Afternoon Adventures to a variety of local spaces such as the playpark.

The children were meaningfully and happily engaged in their play, both indoors and outdoors, enjoying a variety of play activities and learning opportunities. This helped to foster the calm, purposeful atmosphere of Linkwood Nursery.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of staffing

### Findings from the inspection

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Staff had an attentive and unassuming manner with the children, their role modelling helped children learn about self-regulation, self respect and to be socially comfortable with their peers.

The well motivated, enthusiastic approach of staff, most of whom were qualified and experienced, was clearly beneficial to children's learning and development.

Parents told us their child loved the staff and spoke about them regularly. All the staff knew the children really well and this had helped them to learn and develop. The friendly and caring approach of the staff helped them to build trust and to know that their child was safe and enjoying their time at nursery.

Staff worked well together as a team and this helped to create a calm and welcoming atmosphere for the children. They positioned themselves well both inside and outside so that they were able to supervise the children and interact or respond as needed. Staff were mindful of allowing children to find things out for themselves through play, whilst using observations prior to interacting with them to extend their thinking.

The manager provided regular informal and formal support to staff which helped them to feel respected and valued. An appraisal and supervision programme enabled practice, personal and professional development to be discussed and actioned as appropriate. Staff also told us how they appreciated and valued the caring approach in respect of their own health and wellbeing.

Whole staff meetings were well established and enabled the wider sharing of information to take place and for discussion related to the provision of the service. The introduction of senior practitioner meetings with the manager were helping to support clarity of the role and a consistent approach in practice.

Planned practice/training sessions were being introduced so that staff could share and further develop their skills and knowledge through learning together. Staff told us that they were keen to attend and how they were looking forward to the sessions taking place. Staff considered that they were encouraged to complete training, even when they had identified external courses. Training had included: quality interactions and observations, planning in the moment and outdoor learning; a staff member spoke favourably about the benefits of such training. There was an expectation that training was evaluated which supported staff reflection, and identified the impact it made in practice.

## Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

## Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

## Quality of management and leadership

### Findings from the inspection

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Leadership and management reflected the commitment and aspiration of the manager who held a relevant qualification and had substantial experience of working in early learning and childcare. They recognised the benefits of setting priorities, leading and supporting staff both at an individual level and as a team.

The manager had implemented processes that helped to establish a strong and cohesive team that focused on everyone working together for the best interests of children. Staff were clear about their daily roles and they also had assigned tasks linked to quality assurance. We suggested that the manager explore with staff their understanding of the tasks so that expectations and actions were clarified.

There was a shared vision and focus for the service that valued the views of all those involved. Parents told us that they felt able to raise any issues at any time due to the open and supportive approach of the manager and staff. On occasions they were asked to share their views through surveys, they could also add comments on the social media page. Parents also told us how they really liked being involved in their child's assessment of learning through the implementation of planning in the moment. Children were able to lead their own learning and their views influenced the planning of wider activities.

The service improvement plan identified key focus areas linked to the document, How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare, with a view to making positive changes that improved outcomes for children. Local authority improvement visits, the staff support and supervision programme and staff meetings, were also a valuable part of the process. Staff told us that they had been consulted about the improvement plan and had identified what was working well and what could be better. The staff were keen to further develop the outdoor play area so that children had the best play and learning experiences.

The manager recognised that self-evaluation was a continuous process and that there would be benefit in changes leading to improvement being more readily captured within the improvement book.

### Requirements

**Number of requirements:** 0

### Recommendations

**Number of recommendations:** 0

**Grade:** 5 - very good

**What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection**

### Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

## What the service has done to meet any recommendations we made at or since the last inspection

### Previous recommendations

There are no outstanding recommendations.

### 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).

### Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

### Inspection and grading history

This service does not have any prior inspection history or grades.



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Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

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