

# Stoneywood School Nursery Day Care of Children

Stoneywood School  
Greenburn Road  
Bucksburn  
Aberdeen  
AB21 9EL

Telephone: 01224 712 720

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
8 August 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Aberdeen City Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000349

**Service no:**  
CS2003014520

## About the service

Stoneywood School Nursery is a day care of children service situated in the residential area of Bucksburn in Aberdeen, close to local shops and community services. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 60 children at any one time.

Stoneywood School Nursery operates from a dedicated building within the primary school. The premises consist of an entrance area and a large open-plan playroom. Children have direct access to toilets, nappy changing areas and kitchen facilities. A family room provides a private space for meetings. The service has free flow access from the playroom to an enclosed outdoor area.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 06 August 2024 between the hours of 08:35 and 17:15 and 07 August 2024 between the hours of 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 since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with children during their play.
- Received 20 parent/carer online questionnaires.
- Received six staff online questionnaires.
- Spoke with staff and management.
- Observed practice and daily experiences.
- Reviewed documents

## Key messages

- Children were settled and happily engaged in play and learning.
- Children led their own play through a well-balanced mix of activities both indoors and outside.
- Children received nurturing care and support from staff who knew them well.
- The staff team were motivated and enthusiastic about their roles and were keen to continue to take on training to develop their practice.
- To ensure high quality care and experiences for children, quality assurance, including effective audits and monitoring of staff practice should be embedded into practice.

## 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

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

## How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm and nurturing care from staff. Most children were settled, relaxed and confident. When children needed comfort or requested cuddles, we saw that staff were responsive to their needs. Positive attachments had been formed which supported children to feel secure and loved.

Staff knew children well and were able to confidently discuss their interests, likes/dislikes and support that was in place. Generally, children with additional support needs had their needs met. The team were proactive in reaching out to agencies and professionals for advice and specialised input to support them to use strategies to meet the individual needs of the children. Most parents felt they had a strong connection with the staff. One parent said; "I feel comfortable enough with the staff to raise my concerns. I feel comfortable to tell them what I have been struggling with in general and we have discussed and agreed working together and talking through things." Another said; "The staff are all lovely and easy to talk to. They always have time to talk if you need to and really care for my child's development."

Personal plans were in place for all children. The service were in the process of changing the format of personal planning to make sure they gathered meaningful information, supporting children to receive care and support that is right for them. Care plans were in place for children with additional support needs and identified strategies to support staff to tailor care. Plans should be reviewed regularly with families to ensure they contain relevant and up to date information. As a result, staff would have access to key information allowing them to consistently offer children care and support tailored to their needs. **(See area for improvement 3.1)**

Mealtimes had been an improvement focus. We inspected the nursery during the holiday period which meant all children had lunch together in the nursery and, as a result, it was busy. There were some opportunities for children to develop independence through helping to set up and serve drinks. We highlighted that there was scope for this to be developed further. Some staff sat with children supporting them as they ate which provided a nice social experience however, the use of long tables meant some children did not experience this. Consideration should be given to ensure all children are effectively supervised, whilst promoting a sociable mealtime experience. Children ate food that was nutritious and supported their dietary needs.

Medication was stored safely and securely, easily accessible to staff but out of the children's reach. Most of the medication records we sampled contained the relevant information to help staff with safe administration however, we found that forms did not have enough information on emergency procedures. We asked that the service ensure their auditing systems are more robust, to ensure their procedures consistently follow best practice. **(See area for improvement 3.1)**

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had fun and were fully engaged throughout the inspection. Staff were responsive to children's interests and supported their choice in where they played.

The pace of the day was relaxed and unhurried, which meant children had time to explore their ideas. Children had opportunities to lead their play and we saw children problem solve as use their imagination. One child playing in the mud kitchen wanted to pour water from a large pan to a cup, but they were spilling the water. They put a sieve over the cup to see if this would work but they were still spilling water. The child then poured the water from the pan into a jug and then into the cup successfully. Children were using the wide range of resources available to them well and supported their curiosities and thinking skills.

Interactions were calm, patient and encouraging from staff. During discussions with children, staff adapted their pace and language, which supported children's understanding and language development. Some staff were skilled in using open-ended questions to support children's learning. For example, when creating jelly in the water tray, questions such as 'what do we need to do?' and 'how does it feel?' developed their thinking and supported their engagement in the activity. We discussed how this could be developed further throughout the team to ensure learning is meaningful and provides appropriate challenge for children.

Opportunities for literacy and numeracy were evident within children's play experiences. Children engaged well with real resources in the home corner such as a keyboard, phones, clocks, measuring tapes and walkie talkies. Adults sang and read stories with children spontaneously and in groups. Numeracy and language were being supported through play, for example when flying paper aeroplanes which the children had created, both children and adults discussed how far they would fly, who's would fly the furthest, 'let's race' the children said. Children would benefit from more availability of books and mark making materials throughout the environment. This would enhance the opportunities available for literacy and numeracy within play spaces.

Planning processes were in the early stages of development. We noted that changes aimed to help staff promote a balance of planned and responsive learning experiences for the children. This included the development of a planning wall, which would further support evaluating learning and highlight the children's input. Floor books were being used to gather children's ideas, evidence learning and reflect on this. These books were shared with parents and children were able to reflect on these encouraging life skills, such as questioning, memory, investigating, and explaining.

The Seesaw App was used to share information, photos, capture children's learning and share their 'focus week'. This also provided an opportunity for families to see their child's play and learning in detail. Staff had recently accessed support and training on writing observations and next steps. Most of the observations we sampled identified learning which helped staff to assess children's achievements and progress, allowing them to plan the next steps in a child's learning journey.

Children benefited from connections with the school and wider community. Children had access to the gym hall, library, sensory room, the woods and the MUGA (multi use games area) within the school. During the holiday period the children had especially enjoyed visits to local parks. A parent had recently been invited into the setting to share their job as a flight attendant following the children's interest around travel. This had led to staff contacting the airport nearby to arrange a visit and more parents had offered to share their skills with the children. This contributed to children's sense of belonging and supported them to have new opportunities out with the setting. Parents welcomed the connections with the community. One parent said; "They go for twice weekly trips to the woods within the school grounds which I think is a fantastic experience. They have recently been out in the community and trips to the local play park. Daily opportunities to play outside in the garden, often tells me about finding insects and what they have learned about them."

## How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced an environment that was well-furnished and well-maintained with plenty of natural light and ventilation. Children's artwork and photographs were displayed, providing children with ownership of their setting as well as creating a sense of belonging. Resources were of a good quality however, we discussed replenishing loose parts and keeping shelves fully stocked to promote children's imagination, curiosity and creativity. Soft furnishings, such as rugs, cushions and blankets, provided cosy spaces for children to rest during their busy day.

The lay out of play spaces ensured that children could move around areas with ease and could access resources independently. Children were confident in moving around these spaces to explore their ideas and interests. They also had the freedom to transport resources to extend their play further. We noted that some of the equipment in the outdoor area posed a potential risk to children should they have used them to climb onto and over the fence. This could have resulted in children getting out of the setting. To raise staff awareness of potential dangers outdoors and keep children safe we asked the service to review and update their risk assessments taking into consideration where equipment is placed.

Children had free flow access to outdoors most of the day which benefited their health and wellbeing, extended their play and learning and gave children choice in where to play. Children spent time making creations in the mud kitchen, washing cars at the car wash, singing and dancing on stage, flying kites, playing imaginative games and running around being active. All parents told us their children had the opportunity to play outdoors. One parent said; "the nursery garden is amazing, they have a huge choice of equipment to play and learn and the nursery actively encourage learning outdoors". Another parent said; "My child enjoys all aspects of the outdoor play - from bikes to slides, role play in the mud kitchen, exploring the woods, going for walks and having fun in the MUGA".

Systems were in place to support keeping children safe. Risk assessments helped staff to mitigate risk and enhanced children's safety. We discussed the benefits of involving children in developing their skills and awareness of staying safe through opportunities to carry out risk assessments of their play spaces and experiences. The service used the Care Inspectorate's SIMOA campaign, allowing staff to reflect and review safety systems. We suggested using this to support children's understanding of risk.

Infection control measures were understood and implemented effectively by staff. Overall, handwashing routines were mostly embedded. Staff should ensure all children are supported to wash hands following mealtimes. Staff protected children by providing a clean and hygienic environment and PPE (personal protective equipment) was used at appropriate times such as nappy changing and food preparation. This contributed to keep children safe and well.

## How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are led well

The vision, values and aims for the service had recently been reviewed in consultation with staff, children and some families. These had been shared with everyone, ensuring that they are meaningful and capture the needs and wishes of those using and working in the setting.

Children's and families' views and suggestions about their care, play and learning were valued by staff. The feedback we received from parents highlighted that most felt they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. Stay and plays included families in their child's experiences and provided time for the team to showcase the play and learning offered in the setting. Informal comments from this were positive and highlighted that parents had enjoyed seeing their children play and get involved in different types of learning. Feedback from a Microsoft survey, following a recent sports day emphasised how inclusive the sports day was and how they enjoyed being involved in the potted sports. We saw comments from a coffee morning to discuss the new vision had highlighted that parents would like more feedback at pick up time and more information on the Seesaw App. Although the setting had plans in place to support this development, these had not been shared with parents. We discussed ways the setting might do this to ensure parents feel listened to and to create a collaborative approach to improvement.

Staff told us they felt well supported by leaders in the service and were motivated to improve the service provided. The leadership team shared plans to further include staff in driving change, including developing champion roles, offering more support and supervision opportunities and participating in peer monitoring. This would support the team to feel empowered and more involved in driving forward improvements.

A quality assurance calendar was in place and included audits of paperwork and staff practice. However, these were not always effective in identifying areas requiring improvement. The service should now consider how quality assurance processes could be developed to ensure they are consistent, meaningful and positively impact outcomes for children. We suggested quality assurance processes should be extended to include regular audits of medication, personal planning and mealtime experiences. **(See area for improvement 1)**

An improvement plan identified relevant and meaningful areas for development. A self-evaluation e-book had begun to document improvement planning and captured progress made. This system should allow the team to acknowledge their successes and help to measure the impact improvements have had. This would support the pace of change and ensure improvement is maintained.

## Areas for improvement

1. The manager should ensure improved outcomes for children and practice by implementing effective systems of quality assurance. This should include but is not limited to;
  - a) A manageable quality assurance calendar including robust audits and evaluations being developed and implemented, with any actions addressed promptly.
  - b) On the floor staff observations and peer monitoring. This will support staff to evaluate practice and provision, reflecting upon strengths and what could be done better to support improvement.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the 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).

## How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff demonstrated genuine warmth, kindness and interest towards the children they cared for. This resulted in children who were settled, happy and confident. One parent told us; "The staff are kind, caring, knowledgeable and extremely understanding. You can tell they genuinely care about the children they look after and their families. They have been very supportive in respect to our family situation. I have bonded very well with all of the staff."

Some parent's told us they felt they didn't know all the staff and would like more feedback on their child's day and what they have been learning. We discussed the benefits of welcoming parents into the setting daily to establish strong connections. This approach would be particularly valuable when there has been a high turnover of staff. We directed the service to the Care Inspectorate's practice note "Me, my family and my childcare setting".

The leadership team recognised the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed at all times. Overall, the deployment of staff was effective, and they were flexible in their approach, communicating well with each other. Although they had key areas of responsibility, they moved with children or where needed, to support the running of the service and the needs of children. We highlighted that, on occasion, staff became task focussed during children's mealtimes. The deployment of staff during lunch and snack could improve to ensure children have consistent support and supervision.

Staff were appropriately qualified. Some were working towards gaining further qualifications and had a good knowledge of child development. They were able to discuss how they had identified individual areas for development and were supporting children with their social skills, confidence, sensory play, and personal care. One parent told us; "I have noticed a huge change in my child since they started in April. They are a lot braver, accepts change easier, has become better at drawing and better at counting." Another said; "Prior to starting Nursery my child lacked confidence, felt overwhelmed in crowded places and also separation anxiety due to the impact of Covid. My child has been supported by staff and become much more confident and is now comfortable in their surroundings."

Staff were committed to their professional development to ensure they delivered a high-quality service and improved outcomes for children. Staff had undertaken a range learning, included formal training, professional discussions and self-directed reading. This supported staff to develop their knowledge and skills. As a result, children's care, play and learning was informed by current research and best practice. We reminded the leadership team to be mindful of ensuring new staff have access to training they may require to deliver quality play and learning. We would encourage the team to continue to reflect on their professional development, making use of the training logs that were available. This would support them to evaluate the impact training had and allow them to identify further training needs.

Staff inductions had also supported staff knowledge and awareness of their role and responsibilities. The setting already had plans in place to start using the 'Early Learning and Childcare National Induction Resource' to encourage questions and reflection. This would support staff to have a very good understanding of their roles, responsibilities, and effective ways of working.



## 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

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - 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](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto: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.