

# Arnprior Nursery Day Care of Children

Schoolhouse  
Arnprior  
STIRLING  
FK8 3HA

Telephone: 01786 870 729

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
12 September 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Stirling Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002689

**Service no:**  
CS2003015599

## About the service

Arnprior Nursery is a day care of children service registered to provide care for a maximum of 42 children at any one time.

The service is provided from within an old school in the village of Arnprior just outside Stirling. Children are cared for within two large playrooms, the back playroom has access to a secure nursery garden. Children can access toileting and changing facilities. There are two office spaces, a staff room, and staff toilet.

Arnprior nursery is a local authority stand-alone nursery and works in partnership with Stirling Council, to provide ante and pre-school funded places.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10 and 11 September 2024. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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 using the service and reviewed nine responses from our questionnaire from their family members.
- Spoke with staff and management.
- Observed practice and daily life, reviewed documents.

**Key messages**

Calm, warm, and positive interactions by staff contributed to children feeling happy, safe, and secure.

Staff were fun, responsive, and friendly in their approach towards children's requests and needs. This resulted in children that thrived and flourished in a very happy and child centred environment.

Children benefitted from a wealth of loose parts, natural and real-life experiences in both their indoor and outdoor environments.

The leadership team embedded a strong sense of commitment to continuous improvement. Children, their families, and staff were meaningfully involved as key partners in the service as their views were respected and valued.

Staff morale was high, they worked very well together as a team and were reflective practitioners who identified strongly with the service.

Effective staff deployment ensured children were always very well supervised and supported appropriately.

**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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

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

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

5 - Very Good

We evaluated this key question as very good, where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

### 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff were warm, respectful, and nurturing in their approach with children. They were responsive to children's needs and kindly responded to their requests and knew them very well as individuals. As a result, children were having fun, happy, settled and enjoying their time at nursery. One parent told us, 'My child and I are heard, and cared for with empathy and understanding'.

Personal planning was effective in supporting staff to provide individualised compassionate care and support which meant children felt safe and loved. Some children were new to the setting, staff could confidently tell us of their personalities, preferences and dislikes which resulted in them settling quickly into their routines. Staff had built positive working relationships with families and other professionals, to provide consistent care for children requiring extra support. This ensured their needs were met in a respectful way which helped them to be included in nursery experiences in a meaningful way, and provided them with a sense of belonging. We asked the manager to ensure all of the information in personal plans was reviewed regularly to ensure it remained up to date.

Children experienced mealtimes that were unhurried and sociable. Positive attachments were evident as staff sat with children promoting healthy eating, manners and encouraging them to try foods. Children were offered a wealth of opportunities for responsibility, independence, and choice. They helped plan, prepare, and cook their meals and we observed children confidently help staff prepare meals of Macaroni cheese and French toast. Children used vegetables they had grown in the nursery garden when they were cooking meals, a child told us, 'I have an apple tree at home too, we cook with apples and carrots here'. Children were enabled to eat where they played and a large wooden table, under a canopy in the nursery garden allowed children to have choice of where they ate. Mealtimes were a very positive learning experience for children and promoted children's life-long learning skills.

Personal care was sensitively and calmly undertaken which meant children felt safe, valued, and respected during their intimate care routines.

Children were kept safe as staff had effective procedures in place to support their wellbeing and welfare. They were confident in how to report any concerns, accidents and incidents, medication and allergy systems were all managed well.

### 1.3. Play and learning

Children experienced a very good range of responsive and intentional planning which was child centred and relevant to their interests and developing their life skills. Children were empowered to lead their own play and learning and were fully engaged in fun, exciting and interesting experiences that captured their interests, stimulated, and challenged them. Floor books captured children's contributions to planning activities and demonstrated that their thoughts and views were valued and listened too.

Children benefitted from a wealth of loose parts, natural and real-life experiences which were attractively presented within the two playrooms and the nursery garden. This core provision of high-quality resources provided children with a real sense of wonder, challenged, and engaged them in play. We observed busy children who were curious and creative. One child spent extended periods of time building a structure with magnetic shapes and told us, 'This is not easy you know; can you help me build it higher?'.

Staff had high aspirations for children and saw them as individuals with unique strengths and interests. Well considered innovations and creative approaches effectively invited children to play and therefore motivated them to learn. This was complimented by staff that were skilled in effective questioning. Staff successfully scaffolded children's learning and widened their skills by enabling them to think and problem solve independently. Additionally, children were provided with opportunities to consolidate and recall previous learning. These approaches were naturally woven into conversations, embedded in practice and supported children very well to flourish and reach their full potential. As a result, children were happy, confident, eager to learn and progressing well.

Observations and next steps in learning were of high quality. They were focused on development and learning, and staff recognised and were responsive to children when required additional interventions, or supports to enable them to achieve. Children's progress and achievements were monitored and tracked very well. Families told us, 'Staff have regular meetings with me about my child's development as well as keeping me up to date in-between, and approach me with any new developments or new experiences my child has achieved', and 'My child's plan is regularly reviewed, and I have a good understanding of their abilities and needs'.

Children benefitted from opportunities to explore and become connected to their local and wider communities as a wide range of experiences were offered to families. For example, fund raising events, bingo and movie nights, visits to farms, and invitations into the nursery to 'make and taste' meals together.

## How good is our setting?

**5 - Very Good**

We evaluated this key question as very good, where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

### 2.2. Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for within two large playrooms. Both demonstrated a calm ambience and were welcoming and inviting spaces. The 'home from home' feel was meaningfully created with neutral décor, real life experiences and vintage furniture. Soft lightening and interesting ceiling mobiles created warmth and high-quality resources promoted children's investigation, curiosity, enquiry, and imagination skills. There was ample space to meet children's needs and for them to comfortably play and learn. Families agreed and told us 'It's such a homely environment' and 'Homely environment and outstanding care given by the girls at Arnprior'.

Comfortable and homely areas were provided, and we saw children and staff sit and cuddle on very large sofas and read stories together. Cosy and nurturing areas were well thought out in the back playroom and enabled children to relax in comfort and have some quiet, alone time if needed. We asked the manager to consider how these areas could be offered to children in the main playroom and encouraged staff to use both playrooms regularly throughout the children's day.

Children did not always experience free flow to the nursery garden if they were playing in the main playroom and we suggested ways in which this could be offered, as part of their daily routines.

However, it was managed well, and most children accessed the garden which was an inviting and peaceful place for children to play with interesting resources and activities. Children proudly showed us vegetables and wildflowers they were growing and caring for. A well-resourced numeracy shed enabled children to match and sort natural materials and their gross motor skills were promoted, as they built structures with larger loose parts. A wooden canopy provided children with shelter from the elements and rugs and cushions meant children could comfortably look at books and rest. We suggested ways in which staff could further develop language and literacy skills outdoors. For example, introducing recipe cards to the mud kitchen.

Staff had a good understanding of infection prevention and control practices which kept children safe. For example, hand washing routines were embedded and children were encouraged to wash their hands after touching bin lids, when returning from the garden and before eating.

Staff effectively used a risk benefit approach with children and had implemented wellbeing buddies to support children to think about their choices. For example, we heard staff ask children if 'Safe Stella' would think that their actions were keeping their friends safe. Staff and children had also developed a good understanding of our SIMOA (safety, inspect, monitor, observe, act) keeping children safe campaign and how this supported them to ensure children were accounted for at all times. A child told us, 'We need to count everyone'. These approaches resulted in children developing an awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe.

## How good is our leadership?

**5 - Very Good**

We evaluated this key question as very good, where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

### 3.1. Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Visible strong and supportive leadership resulted in staff who had confidence in their capacity to support children and families, to reach their full potential. Leaders had established strong working relationships enabling a positive ethos of mutual trust and respect between the staff team. This was promoting a very happy, secure, and supportive environment for children and their families .

The leadership team demonstrated a very good understanding of the importance of taking people with you on the improvement journey, by respecting views and promoting an inclusive and safe environment. We found a strong sense of commitment to continuous improvement which promoted a shared vision for the setting and shared responsibility to improving outcomes in a very child centred environment. Families felt included in the service and were confident the service was managed well by senior staff. Their comments included, 'Asked for parent input often and views are listened to,' and 'Nursery always looking for ideas to take on board or ways to improve involving the parents frequently'.

Visible Improvement planning had identified areas for development and allowed for progress to be monitored. Robust self-evaluation processes were having a very positive impact on influencing positive change. Staff were enabled and empowered by the leadership team to be reflective practitioners; it was evident they wanted the best for children in their care.

We asked the manager to continue to develop their quality assurance programme to ensure areas of practice are not overlooked. For example, on a few occasions, some children experienced periods of waiting. For example, for their fruit after they had finished their meal, when making the transition from lunch back to play and getting ready to play outdoors. All staff engaged very well with the inspection and were responsive to our suggestions of how outcomes could be improved further.

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

We evaluated this key question as very good, where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

### 4.3. Staff deployment

Staff had a good mix of skills, knowledge, and experience to meet children's needs. They told us of training they had attended and were knowledgeable on best practice guidance and documents. They confidently told us how they were used in their practice to provide very good outcomes for children.

The staff team were motivated, enthusiastic, and clear about their roles and responsibilities. They complemented each other well which resulted in a happy and strong workforce. Staff worked well together and had established very positive working relationships. An ethos of mutual trust and respect between them promoted a supportive environment for children and families. As a result, children were happy, thriving and enjoyed their nursery experience.

Staff communicated very well to minimise disruption to children's routines. Their breaks were managed well with key staff supporting children at busier times of the day. Effective staff deployment ensured children were always well supervised and supported appropriately.

Newer staff to the service, were provided with a robust induction which gave them confidence within their roles and responsibilities. They were complimentary of the leadership team and other staff members whom they found approachable and supportive which ensured they felt part of the existing team.

Staff understood the importance of having positive relationships with families and children. Families that answered our questionnaire held the staff team in high regard. Their comments included. 'All the girls are amazing, so friendly, they feel like extended family', 'Nursery staff genuinely care about the kids like they are their own, confidently know my child is in safe hands' and 'The girls are all very involved and know all kids very well, I have never experienced a time where my child has needed someone or something and not received help'.

## 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?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good



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