

# Aberlady Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Moor Road  
Aberlady  
Prestonpans  
EH32 0RQ

Telephone: 01875 870 232

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
30 August 2024

**Service provided by:**  
East Lothian Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002600

**Service no:**  
CS2003015829

## About the service

Aberlady Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 20 children aged three years to primary school age entry.

The nursery is situated in a separate area attached to the primary school providing early learning and childcare. Aberlady is a rural village in East Lothian. The nursery comprises of a reception area with cloak room, playroom and children's toilets. The children have direct access from the playroom to the outdoor area. Nappy changing facilities are within the primary school.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection that took place on 23 August 2024 between 08:30 and 16:30. We returned to the service on 26 August 2024 between 09:00 and 16:00. The inspection was carried out by one inspector.

To prepare for this inspection we reviewed information about the 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 evaluations we:

- spoke with and observed children using the service
- received written feedback from four families
- spoke with staff and received written feedback from two staff members
- spoke with the senior practitioner and the leadership team
- observed practice and children's routines and experiences
- reviewed documents.

We provided feedback to the service on Thursday 20 June 2024.

## Key messages

- Children benefited from warm and responsive relationships with caring staff who take a genuine interest in them as individuals.
- Children had access to a number of experiences and resources that supported their literacy and numeracy development.
- The provider should review the overall lunchtime experience including where children eat, this will ensure children's individual needs are supported.
- Children were cared for in a warm, nurturing environment where they were supported to develop their independence, skills and abilities.
- Children's art work, achievements, displays and photographs promoted opportunities for conversations, as children reflected on their learning, in turn promoting their language and communication development.
- Families views and contributions were valued and the service looked for new opportunities to strengthen relationships and learn together.
- Staff deployment and training should be further considered to ensure quality interactions with children.

## 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 made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children and young people's experiences.

### Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, and nurturing care to support their wellbeing. They were developing positive relationships with staff and approached them for comfort and cuddles. This helped children to feel happy, relaxed, and safe in the nursery. Staff were aware of the individual needs of the children in their care. They responded sensitively to children's nonverbal cues and needs. However staff were restricted at times in meeting the needs of all children in their care due to the staffing constraints. **(See area for improvement 1 under 4.3 Staff deployment).**

Some children were transitioning into the nursery and others had recently moved onto school. These transitions were flexible and individual to meet the needs of children. Families were invited into the nursery, to meet staff caring for their child and to share relevant information about their child's wellbeing needs. As a result, staff and families worked together to support a positive transition.

Snack times were a positive and social experience for children. They were relaxed and calm, enhancing children's positive relationships with food. Children were given responsibility and their independence was encouraged while helping prepare snacks, self-serving their food and clearing up. Supportive conversations during these times contributed to children's learning and engagement. A water station encouraged children to pour their own drinks and keep hydrated. The lunch time experience took place in the school dining hall and most children were aware of the routine and ate well. However this area was noisy and not a suitable environment to provide a positive mealtime experience for some children who became upset. **(See area for improvement 1).**

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through personal plans. These were created in partnership with parents and provided sufficient information on children's health, wellbeing, and safety needs. Staff could confidently talk about children's individual likes, dislikes and wishes. They worked closely alongside other professionals to support children and ensure a consistent approach. Families commented, "Staff are fantastic. They know and respond to children's individual needs and preferences. They are all kind and really care for the children". Moving forward, staff could continue to review and implement children's identified strategies of support this would contribute to ensuring all children's needs are met.

Children were safe from harm because staff were clear about their safeguarding responsibilities. They received regular training in child protection, which contributed to their understanding of how to keep children safe.

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and Learning

There were a good range of varied play experiences to support children's play and learning. Resources were displayed in a way that promoted choice and independence. Most children were confident in making independent choices and were engaged in their learning. For example, children, had fun playing with water, sand and blocks.

Planning approaches had changed to ensure these were more responsive and child centred. Staff supported children to revisit their learning through a variety of methods. For example, the use of floor books, which captured children's voices, displays around the room and conversations between children and staff. Staff were responsive and were supporting and extending children's play. Children were learning about the solar system, space, planets, astronauts, mini beasts, frogs and the life cycle. These experiences had led to further learning for children, through adventure visits within the community, looking at moths, shells and crabs.

Staff were down at child height and their positive body language and facial expressions supported children to be heard and participate. This fostered positive relationships and sent the message to children that they were being listened to and that they were important. It was difficult for staff to continually provide a supportive learning environment for all children due to staffing constraints. This impacted on children's learning experiences (refer to recommendation 1 under 4.3 Staff deployment).

Children had access to a number of experiences and resources that supported their literacy and numeracy development. Children benefitted from the introduction of a variety of text, symbols and images throughout the learning environment. They enjoyed books and listening to stories. Story mapping had been introduced to support children's interests in books, to retell events and develop their language skills. There were attractive displays of children's own story maps, art work and achievements. This provided children with a sense of ownership of the space and supported children to celebrate their successes and achievements.

Children had opportunities to make connections within the community to support play and learning, for example visits to the local shop and farm. Families had visited the nursery, shared their skills and some celebrations with children. For example, Scottish ceilidh and singalong party. Stay and play sessions were organised for families to be involved in their child's play and learning. As a result, families explored the learning environment and shared learning experiences with their child.

### Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children's health, wellbeing and care needs are met during the lunch experience, the provider should review where food is provided to children to support an inclusive environment and to meet their individual needs. This would also ensure children's needs are met as outlined in their care plans.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'If I need help with eating and drinking, this is carried out in a dignified way and my personal preferences are respected' (HSCS 1.35).

'I can enjoy unhurried snack and meal times in as a relaxed atmosphere as possible (HSCS 1.34).

### How good is our setting?

**4 - Good**

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children and young people's experiences.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The nursery provides a welcoming and comfortable environment for children. There is of plenty natural light and playrooms were well ventilated. The entrance area offers a attractive space with a range of displays and information for families.

There was a calm and pleasant atmosphere in the nursery. Children arrived full of excitement, eager to share what they were wearing or items they had brought in from home. For example, a child had brought a story book to share with the other children. Most children were relaxed, happy and confident in their environment.

Spaces were well furnished and reflected children's current interests. Staff had reflected on the environment to make improvements. They had recently changed the story corner, house corner and moved the pod to a quieter area, which had provided more space. Children had opportunities for open-ended play which promoted their curiosity, imagination, and creativity. There were areas both indoors and outdoors for children to rest, relax and have a quiet time.

Ensuring the playroom was safe was the priority for staff. However, this impacted on the level of experiences and learning on offer to children. For example, there was no sand in the playroom and small resource items were removed. Staff told us, 'taking resources away had impacted on children's learning'. Moving forward, the team should reflect on what resources are available. Ongoing risk assessing of the resources and environment would support children's safety and contribute to their learning experience.

Photos of children's families, and special items were displayed throughout the environment. This promoted opportunities for conversations as children reflected on their learning in turn supporting their language and communication development These supported children to feel safe, comfortable, and a sense of belonging.

Moving forward, we asked the service to review the environment to make sure all areas are kept tidy and well maintained. Daily checks of children's toilets could be carried out to make sure children always have plenty of hand towels. For the privacy and dignity of children we asked the service to look at screening the window from the playroom into children's toilets. This was actioned after our visit.

Children could access the outdoor area directly from the playroom. We observed children help staff to set up the garden in the morning. Parents were encouraged to dress their children in appropriate clothing for outdoor play in all weathers. Outdoor play was popular with some children, and they happily moved between indoors and outdoors. Staff and children had worked to develop the outdoor environment with planters. They had grown strawberries, pees, potatoes, herbs, flowers, and grass to use in the mud kitchen. Families were invited to help children planting and growing within the nursery garden. As a result they were meaningfully involved in the service.

## How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children and young people's experiences.

### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service advocate a strong sense of community that values and supports strong family connections. 'A place for everyone to feel cared for, to belong and to achieve'.

This demonstrated the service's commitment to working together with families to make sure all children were treated as individuals, with kindness and respect. The service had recently reviewed their vision and values and these focused on wonder, respect resilience and drive. Nursery children were involved in designing and collecting items for their child friendly visual values display. Children told us, how they respected the nursery toys and their friends.

The leadership team engaged well throughout the inspection and showed a commitment to making improvements in the setting to promote good outcomes for children. For example, some actions were taken immediately following the inspection to make improvements.

There were good quality assurance systems in place to monitor different aspects of the service. A quality assurance calendar recorded actions throughout the year and senior staff monitored completion of these. This working document was evaluated and adjusted to reflect the priorities within the service. The new staff were keen to take on more responsibility such as, monitoring roles, with an understanding that quality assurance was everyone's role. This would support the team to in the future to bring about positive change for children and their families.

The service communicates in a range of ways with families. For example, emails, newsletters, school blog, twitter and the school website. Families had good opportunities to be involved in the nursery and to make suggestions for improvements. For example, they were invited to parents' consultations and to be part of the Parent Council. This created a supportive and collaborative environment. Parents confirmed, "I am a representative for nursery on the Parent Council, and feed in views from nursery parents/carers."

## How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children and young people's experiences.

### 4.3 Staff deployment

There had been some recent changes to the staff team. For example, some staff had secured new roles within the service. Staff were working to build relationships with each other and to settle into new roles.

While we found that adult to child ratios met minimum standards, there were times when the deployment of staff impacted on the quality interactions of all children. Deployment of staff was not effective in ensuring high quality outcomes for children although minimum ratios were being met by the service. For example, there were times when only two staff were available to care for children, and if a child needed extra support or help with personal care, then the team had to call the school for help with staffing. This impacted on the number of people transitioning into and from the nursery. In addition, there were times when it was difficult for staff to meet the individual needs of children in their care. **(See area for improvement 1)**. We recognised the leadership team took action to review and increase the level of staffing which will enhance support in place for children.

All staff were trained to a HNC Early Education and Childcare level. They were motivated to providing an environment where they could support children's needs. The team had identified they needed to undertake further specific training around a range of additional support needs, to meet the needs of all children in their care. Moving forward the provider should provide suitable training to support staff's understanding and help them to provide crucial strategies of support and good outcomes to allow children to fulfil their

potential. Following the inspection the leaderships team shared they had met with the education support officer for the early years, to plan enhanced professional learning sessions for the nursery team.

Staff made use of the time available, as an opportunity for them to discuss children's care and their individual needs. Wednesday meetings and a communication book was used to further support sharing of information.

Families confirmed, "Great staff. They are very knowledgeable, flexible and approachable. I feel they really know my child and I am happy to leave them." and the staff work so hard to meet the needs of all the children, but I feel they are sometimes stretched too far."

## Areas for improvement

1.

To ensure continuity of care across the day, and to support all children to experience consistent, quality interactions, the provider should ensure that staff deployment takes into consideration the space, routines, including lunch time and the individual needs of children. Staffing levels should support and contribute to children's safety, wellbeing, and overall early learning experience.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15); and

'People have the time to support and care for me and to speak with me' (HSCS 3.16).

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

### Areas for improvement

#### Previous area for improvement 1

To improve outcomes for all children attending the service - personal plans should be devised that are specific for each child. They should be updated to reflect the strategies that staff have agreed and how they will support the children.

National Care Standards Early Education up to the age of 16:

Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing

Standard 14 - Well managed service.

**This area for improvement was made on 4 September 2017.**



**Action taken since then**

Personal plans had been revised and updated to ensure these were specific for each child. These were created in partnership with parents and provided sufficient information on children's health, wellbeing, and safety needs.

**This area for improvement had been met.**

**Previous area for improvement 2**

The service should increase the range of multi purpose, natural and loose part resources. The layout of the playroom should be reviewed increase choice and open-ended play opportunities.

National Care Standard for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16:  
Standard 5 - Quality of experience.

**This area for improvement was made on 4 September 2017.**

**Action taken since then**

The layout of the playroom had been reviewed to increase children's choice and open-ended play opportunities.

**This area for improvement had been met.**

**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

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