

# Inverallochy School Nursery Day Care of Children

Inverallochy School  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
25 September 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Aberdeenshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000029

**Service no:**  
CS2003015730

## About the service

Inverallochy School Nursery is a day care of children service situated within Inverallochy Primary School and serves the coastal villages of Inverallochy and Cairnbulg in Aberdeenshire.

The service is registered to provide day care to a maximum of 24 children at any one time aged three years to not yet of an age to attend primary school.

Children are cared for in a playroom and a purpose-built outdoor shelter, leading to a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The service is within easy access to local amenities, such as the convenience store and library.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 24 and 25 September 2024 between 09:15 and 16:00. 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, 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
- spoke with three of their parents/carers
- spoke with staff and management
- received 15 parent questionnaires
- received eight staff questionnaires
- observed practice and daily experiences
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children experienced caring and loving interactions.
- Snacks and mealtimes were relaxed, unhurried, and supported children's independence.
- Children were supported in their learning and had fun.
- Children were cared for in a spacious and appealing environment.
- Self evaluation and quality assurance processes led to improved outcomes for children.
- Staff were committed to their professional development and ongoing training.

## 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.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced caring and loving interactions. Friendly and familiar staff welcomed the children, contributing to building positive attachments. Staff were responsive to children's needs, helping to build their independence and confidence. Children were cuddled when upset and staff used kind words to provide reassurance and support. Staff interactions were kind when supporting children in their personal care, always respecting their dignity and privacy.

Improvements had been made to children's personal plans. The systems and procedures for storing information had been reviewed, making staff access easier. Changes in children's care needs, progress, and development were regularly updated and reviewed, resulting in their needs being well met. For all children who required them, support plans with clear strategies were in place to help staff meet their individual needs. Parents were involved in this process, contributing to consistent and nurturing care. Parent comments included "I have been asked about my child and completed a personal plan about their needs, preferences, permissions, etc. and have signed various documents/paperwork when changes are made".

Positive changes to lunch routines included serving meals in the playroom. This led to a quieter and more calm mealtime experience. Children enjoyed nutritious and healthy snacks and lunches and any preferences and food intolerances were well catered for. Staff sat with and provided children with help and support. They encouraged good manners and promoted children's safety by reminding them to stay seated when eating. However, there were not always enough staff seated with children to provide them with the individual support they needed. We addressed our concerns with staff and immediate action was taken.

Children's safety, emotional security, and wellbeing was supported through sensitive arrangements for sleep, rest, and relaxation. Cosy spaces had been created where children could rest and play quietly. Staff read stories with children, offering opportunities for recuperation and rest.

Children and their families were kept safe and protected from harm and abuse. The manager and staff were clear in their understanding of their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Effective systems and procedures to record and action child protection and wellbeing concerns limited any potential for information recorded on children's chronologies to be missed.

### 1.3 Play and learning

Children were happy and enjoyed playing with their friends. They were able to choose where they wanted to play and benefited from free-flow indoor and outdoor play. This promoted their independence and supported their emotional health and wellbeing.

Planning approaches to support children's learning were responsive to their interests and life experiences. Observations with some next steps in learning were of good quality and used to inform planning. As a result, most children took part in activities they enjoyed and were progressing well.

Children experienced positive transition times. Short, focussed group times were interesting and engaging and helped children follow daily routines.

Staff were kind and interacted with the children during play. They were engaging when reading stories, encouraging children to look at the pictures and repeat familiar phrases. Staff enjoyed playing with the children and used questioning to stimulate curiosity and understanding. For example, children were excited to plan a birthday party for a doll and were encouraged to think about what they would need.

Children benefitted from some opportunities in language, literacy, and numeracy development. There were opportunities to recognise letters in their names and there were mark making opportunities when painting or at the craft table. There were also mark making opportunities within the construction area (construction plans booklet) and outdoors with chalk. Numbers were displayed and staff introduced early mathematical language while playing in areas such as the sand tray. Children had fun using measuring tapes in the construction area.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through connections to their own and wider communities. Effective use was made of the school environment and children were confident in using the hall and other communal areas. Children took part in regular walks and visits to the local shop and library.

### 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.

Children were cared for in a bright and well ventilated environment. The furnishings and fittings were of good quality and were well maintained.

Children played in a safe environment. Risk assessments and daily checks helped identify any potential hazards. Children were encouraged to understand the impact of risky play and were supported to make positive choices to keep safe.

Staff demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of infection prevention and control. The setting was clean and staff followed guidance when supporting children prepare snack and when serving lunch.

The playroom and outdoor shelter looked appealing. Positive changes to the organisation of these areas meant there was plenty of space to play freely, access resources independently, and use the interactive whiteboard safely. A parent commented "Nursery is very well laid out and welcoming for all".

Staff had been instrumental in developing play zones to support children's learning and development. The role play area looked inviting with some real-life resources, dolls, and their accessories. There were some loose parts and natural resources to stimulate children's creativity and imaginative play.

Children were able to access an attractive outdoor area. Despite the inclement weather, children had fun jumping in the puddles and playing in the mud kitchen. A very appealing stage for performance had been created inside a shed. A parent commented "The outdoor area is really good with plenty to do. Children always seem happy when outside".

### 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.

The manager of the service promoted an ambitious shared vision which focussed on improvement and positive outcomes for all. Parents, children, and staff had been involved to help ensure sustained change.

The vision, values, and aims of the service were in a process of review and development. Staff, parents, and children had made suggestions of values which were important to them. These included being friendly, kind, calm, nurturing, and partnership working. These aspirations were reflected in practice.

Parent views were sought to actively inform the development of the setting. After consultation, some parents felt they would like more information on their child's learning and ways to support this at home. As a result, 'grab bags' containing helpful tips and guidance were created. Initial feedback on their introduction had been positive and further consultation on additional subjects were planned.

Parents had enjoyed play-and-stay sessions. These provided opportunities for parents to play with their child in nursery. Verbal feedback on these sessions had been very positive. Other communication methods, including newsletters and private social media, helped keep parents informed and included in any new initiatives.

The children's voice was evident in the play experiences and through choice of resources and where to play.

Self evaluation and quality assurance processes focussed on making improvements identified within the previous inspection. This was evident in the improved nurturing interactions observed throughout the day, the improved environment, and improved mealtime experiences. There were some opportunities for staff to reflect, make suggestions, and voice their opinion. These included team meetings, support and supervision, and annual appraisals. However, a few staff felt ways to involve them in self evaluation could be improved.

Continued areas for development included an ongoing review of the vision, values, and aims, embedding planning approaches, and mealtimes. Future improvement focuses included family nurture.

## 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.

Children experienced quality care from a committed staff team. Staff morale had improved and there was a positive ethos in the setting. Staff had been instrumental in developing learning play areas, such as the small world area and role play corner. These areas were better resourced and more spacious, contributing to improved engagement and sustained play.

Staff had built positive relationships with children and families. Most parents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they had a strong connection to staff. Comments included "Staff are very nice, always make you feel welcome". A few parents felt procedures at arrival and pick-up times limited opportunities to get to know staff personally. This was recognised by the service who had developed a display of staff photographs and created a new parent zone for confidential chats.

The approach to staffing meant there were enough staff to keep children safe and well. Staff absences were minimal and staff were flexible and willing to cover absences, if needed. This meant children were cared for by staff who knew them well. Staff breaks were well planned and did not impact on the supervision of children at busier times of the day, such as arrival and departure.

Children were supported by a team who worked well together. Staff told us they enjoyed working at the setting and felt their strength was working as a team. They communicated throughout the day to keep each other informed on their whereabouts. On a few occasions, staff communication could have been better to ensure quality engagement with children. For example, staff playing a game with a group of children were asked to support with their personal care. As a result, children lost interest and left the game.

Staff had undertaken some professional development to improve service provision. This included visiting other settings, reading, and attending training courses. Staff training in child protection had led to an increased confidence when following the service's systems and procedures to help keep children and their families safe. In order to sustain and further develop quality care and outcomes for children, staff should continue to access training, guidance, and practice documents.

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

### Requirements

#### Requirement 1

By 10 June 2024, the provider and manager must ensure children are supported with nurturing and loving care that meets their care needs and emotional wellbeing.

To do this, the provider and manager, must at a minimum:

- a) Ensure children's up-to-date care and support needs are included within their personal plan and staff use this information to effectively support them.
- b) Ensure staff are well informed about the children attending and use this information to provide individualised and responsive care relevant to their needs.
- c) Ensure children are provided with warmth, comfort, and compassion.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15); and 'As a child or young person I feel valued, loved, and secure' (HSCS 3.10).

**This requirement was made on 28 March 2024.**

## Action taken on previous requirement

Children's personal plans contained current information about children's care needs, interests, and preferences. This meant staff were well informed on how best to meet their individual needs. As a result, children experienced warm and loving interactions.

## Met - within timescales

### Requirement 2

By 10 June 2024, the provider must ensure children are safeguarded and protected from harm.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

- a) Ensure the manager and staff have the required skills and knowledge in relation to recognising and responding to child protection concerns.
- b) Ensure the manager and staff are competent and knowledgeable about national, local, and the service's own child protection procedures and 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC).
- c) Ensure the manager and staff are competent in completing chronologies and use these to take appropriate action to support children and their families.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying, and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities' (HSCS 3.20).

**This requirement was made on 28 March 2024.**

## Action taken on previous requirement

The manager and staff were clear in their understanding of their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe. Systems and procedures to record and action child protection and wellbeing concerns were effective and limited the potential for information recorded on children's chronologies to be missed.

## Met - within timescales



## 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 promote children's understanding and enjoyment of healthy eating and drinking, the manager and staff should improve mealtime experiences. This should include but not be limited to providing a calm lunchtime environment and effective staff supervision and help when eating.

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 1.34).

**This area for improvement was made on 28 March 2024.**

#### Action taken since then

Positive changes to lunch routines included serving meals in the playroom. This led to a quieter and more calm mealtime experience. Children enjoyed nutritious and healthy snacks and lunches and any preferences and food intolerances were well catered for. Staff sat with and provided children with help and support.

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

#### Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's learning and development, the manager and staff should ensure children experience high quality play and learning relevant to their age and stage of development. This should include but not be limited to ensuring staff are knowledgeable and trained in using effective questioning to scaffold learning and extend children's thinking.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation, and problem solving, including through imaginative play and storytelling' (HSCS 1.30).

**This area for improvement was made on 28 March 2024.**

#### Action taken since then

Children took part in a range of age-appropriate learning experiences. They had fun jumping in puddles and making friendship bracelets. Staff enjoyed playing with the children and used questioning to stimulate children's curiosity and develop their understanding.

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

#### Previous area for improvement 3

To support children's learning and development, the manager and staff should ensure the environment is well set out, equipped, and resourced to facilitate children's imagination, enquiry, and curiosity. This should include but not be limited to ensuring children have the space to move freely.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have enough physical space to meet my needs and wishes' (HSCS 5.22).

**This area for improvement was made on 28 March 2024.**

### Action taken since then

Positive changes to the organisation of the playroom and outdoor shelter meant there was plenty of space to play freely, access resources independently, and play safely.

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

### Previous area for improvement 4

To improve positive outcomes for children, the provider and manager should ensure self evaluation and quality assurance of the service are embedded in practice and effective.

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).

**This area for improvement was made on 28 March 2024.**

### Action taken since then

Self evaluation and quality assurance processes focussed on making improvements identified within the previous inspection. This was evident in the improved nurturing interactions observed throughout the day, the improved environment, and improved mealtime experiences.

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

### Previous area for improvement 5

To improve positive outcomes for children and their families, the provider and manager should ensure the service values, aims, and objectives positively inform nursery practice.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support because people have the necessary information and resources' (HSCS 4.27).

**This area for improvement was made on 28 March 2024.**

### Action taken since then

The vision, values, and aims of the service were in a process of review and development. Staff, parents, and children had made suggestions of values which were important to them. These included being friendly, kind, calm, nurturing, and partnership working. These aspirations were reflected in practice.

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

### Previous area for improvement 6

To support children's care needs, learning, and development, the provider and manager should ensure effective communication, deployment, and skills of staff.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'People have time to support and care for me and to speak with me' (HSCS 3.16).

**This area for improvement was made on 28 March 2024.**

#### **Action taken since then**

Staff had undertaken some professional development which led to an increased confidence in their knowledge and skills. The approach to staffing meant there were enough staff to support and care for children. Staff communicated throughout the day, contributing to improved experiences for children.

**This area for improvement has 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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