

# St. Peter's Primary School Nursery Class Day Care of Children

South Isle Road  
Ardrossan  
KA22 7PX

Telephone: 01294 462 554

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
10 September 2024

**Service provided by:**  
North Ayrshire Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003327

**Service no:**  
CS2003016039

## About the service

St. Peter's Primary School Nursery Class is attached to St. Peter's Primary School and is located in Ardrossan, North Ayrshire. The service is provided by North Ayrshire Council.

The service is registered to provide a daycare of children's service for a maximum of 34 children aged from two years old to those not yet attending primary school, of whom no more than 24 will be aged 3 years to those not attending primary school and no more than 10 will be 2 to 3 years only. At the time of the inspection, 32 children were registered with the service.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 9 and 10 September 2024. 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 using the service
- we issued the manager with electronic questionnaires to share with all families using the service and we received one response
- spoke with all staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

## Key messages

- Children experienced warm and caring interactions which supported their overall wellbeing.
- Staff knew the children's needs and preferences well.
- Children could access a well-equipped enclosed outdoor space.
- The environment and play experiences should continue to be developed to capture children's interests and curiosities, supporting them to engage meaningfully in their play and learning.
- Staff deployment should be improved to ensure staff can safely supervise children at play.
- The management team should continue to develop and embed quality assurance processes to support a culture of reflective practice that informs improvement.

## 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?	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate

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

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

## 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

### Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm and caring interactions which supported their overall wellbeing. Most staff knew the needs and preferences of children well, and staff that were new to the service were prioritising becoming familiar with each child's daily care needs. This contributed to children feeling safe and secure.

Personal plans were in place for all children attending the service and the plans that we sampled were reflective of children's individual preferences, health and wellbeing needs. Personal plans should now be further developed to outline how staff planned to meet children's needs including any identified support strategies. In addition, management should ensure chronologies are introduced to track significant changes in children's lives. For example, when children receive a diagnosis of a health or medical condition. This will ensure staff have a holistic view of children and their overall needs.

Working relationships with external agencies were valued and children requiring additional support had detailed individual support plans in place. These had been developed in partnership with families and lead professionals with a clear focus on improving outcomes for children and families. However, the management team should ensure that children's support plans are reviewed and updated regularly to ensure they reflect children's current needs. This will ensure children receive the right support at the right time.

During lunch, staff sat with children to ensure they experienced a sociable mealtime. Children sat together while they ate and we observed positive interactions. However, on the first day of our inspection, the lunch room was loud and busy, with some staff focussed on tasks. This meant that staff were not always immediately available to respond to some children's requests for support. This had improved by the next day. There were limited opportunities for children to be involved in the planning and preparation of mealtimes and to fully promote their independence. We discussed with the management team ways this could be improved and asked that meal times are monitored to ensure children consistently experience a nurturing mealtime which supports their independence and development of life skills.

Staff were confident about child protection procedures. They had attended in-house training and were confident with their responsibilities should they be required to report any concerns. Staff knew who to report any concerns to in the absence of the child protection coordinator. This helped to keep children safe.

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children's wellbeing was supported by routine daily access to outdoors. The garden area provided space for children to explore sensory experiences and develop their physical skills. There were some loose parts available, which are play materials with no pre determined outcome and support children to develop their imagination. As a result, children were having fun whilst developing their confidence outdoors.

Planning approaches to play and learning had recently been reviewed to support children to lead their own play. We saw children having fun and freely accessing the resources available to them. However, we found that there was scope for staff to further support children's interests, ideas and curiosities within the learning environment. For example, we saw that some play zones were not accessed by children for

purposeful play and some lacked sufficient resources that were stimulating. Further developing play and learning environments inline with children's interests will help secure breadth and depth of learning and ensure children's curiosities are supported. This will aid in extending learning to help children progress in their development.

Where staff engaged with children at their level, they showed enthusiasm in their interactions. However, we saw some missed opportunities for children to be challenged or supported through play. Some behaviours we observed such as, drawing on the furniture and throwing play items demonstrated children's lack of engagement. We also observed some staff restricting children from transporting play materials such as sand across areas which limited their opportunities for cross curricular learning. More consistent and effective use of staff questioning to extend children's play and learning should be promoted to support children's critical thinking and problem solving skills. Developing the balance of well planned and spontaneous learning opportunities and promoting children's learning through skilled staff interactions was an area for improvement made at the service previous inspection, which has not been fully met and therefore is repeated within this inspection report.

Planning and tracking of children's progress over time should be further developed to ensure children's next steps in learning and development are identified and planned for. This will support management to have an overview of where children are achieving and where further support is required. Strengthening this approach will ensure children make progress in skills and achieve their potential.

## How good is our setting?

### 4 - Good

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

#### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The setting was comfortable and child friendly. Children benefitted from playrooms containing natural light, good ventilation and direct access to outdoors. Both playrooms were well furnished and provided comfortable play spaces for children.

Children experience an environment that was clean and clutter free. There was a clear process for reporting maintenance issues and repairs. As a result, children experienced an environment that was safe and well-maintained.

Staff understood the health and well-being benefits of facilitating free flow access to outdoor play. Children attending the 3-5 room could freely access outdoors for most of the day, and whilst children attending the 2-3 playroom did access outdoors, this was planned for by staff and not in response to children's choice. Management and staff should consider ways to ensure all children can choose to play between the indoor and outdoor environments at a time that meets their needs, wishes and preferences. This will ensure children's play and learning needs are met.

Fitted kitchenettes in the two playrooms meant that staff could provide healthy snacks in a safe and hygienic manner. A dedicated dining area within the nursery provided a space for children to go to for mealtimes away from play and distractions. During the inspection, we noted that some children who did not eat the lunch were not being offered alternatives. The management team told us that they would have expected children to be offered alternative savory options such as a sandwich or crackers as these were always available in the service. The management team should monitor staff practice at mealtimes to ensure children do not go hungry.

Records of accidents and incidents were recorded appropriately and shared with parents. An audit was in place tracking the number of accidents and incidents that occurred each month. We suggested that the audit could be developed further to identify any patterns and the actions taken to prevent reoccurrence. This could include adaptations to the environment or specific strategies for individual children. This would contribute to children's safety.

## How good is our leadership?

### 3 - Adequate

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

#### **Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well**

The management team told us that the service had recently gone through significant staff changes as the result of changing the service model of delivery. This meant that some staff were new to the service and that the team had two staff vacancies at the time of our inspection. The management felt this had impacted on our inspection findings. The management team shared their intentions to focus on building the team and supporting relationships, and we acknowledge the importance of this to continue with the positive ethos established at the service.

At their previous inspection, we asked the team revisit their vision, values and aims to ensure these reflected the aspirations of the early years staff, children and families. This had not yet been actioned and we encouraged the current team to undertake this due to the significant changes to staffing and service delivery. This will ensure a shared vision for service delivery based on the needs of staff, children, their families and the wider community.

Management and staff engaged well with the inspection process and demonstrated a positive attitude towards change and improvement. Where we made suggestions for improvements, the management team took action promptly. For example, we found that the recording formats for administering medication were inconsistent and medication recordings were not audited by management. Prior to concluding this inspection, a new format was introduced and the management team shared their plans to undertake more detailed audits. This demonstrated capacity and willingness within the management team to make informed improvements.

The service plans for improvement were determined by a whole school plan. There was limited acknowledgement of early years within this plan and we encouraged the management team to develop an action plan to address some of the points discussed as part of this inspection. This should also include a plan to meet the two unmet areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Staff, children and their families should be more involved in identifying service improvements to ensure future plans are formed from the views, wishes and aspirations of those directly involved with the service.

Whilst we recognise that team meetings provided opportunities for staff to reflect and discuss what they felt was working well and what could be improved, the impact of staffs involvement was not always clear and the processes for self-evaluation were not consistently leading to improvement. At the previous inspection, we asked that quality assurance processes were implemented and imbedded, we found that this area for improvement had not been met and is repeated within this inspection report. Quality assurance processes should include but are not limited to; meaningful consultation with staff, children and families, self-evaluation which leads to improvement and monitoring aspects of staff practice and service delivery. Further improving quality assurance processes will secure improved outcomes for children and families.

**How good is our staff team?****3 - Adequate**

We evaluated this key question as adequate, where strengths only just outweighed weaknesses.

**Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment**

Children benefited from a passionate, kind and caring staff team. Staff were respectful and very supportive of each other. They spoke positively about teamwork and felt that the relationships between team members and management were developing well. The positive team working within the service promoted a happy and secure environment for children.

The management team shared with us their plans to re-establish a model of distributed leadership. This is where staff take responsibility for specific areas of service delivery and develop leadership skills. We encouraged the service to take action and initiate this as leadership at all levels empowers staff, supports them to share their skills and knowledge and builds confidence and resilience within a team.

Staff were deployed appropriately to meet the adult to child ratios. However, due to the layout of the premises and the individual needs of children, staff deployment did not always ensure children received responsive care to ensure their needs were met. For example, during our inspection we observed accidents and incidents which occurred that staff had not witnessed and we observed a number of occasions where children accessed the cosy room or outdoor areas which were not supervised by staff. This meant staff deployment presented a risk to children's safety. We have asked the management team to review the deployment of staff to ensure staff can effectively support children and ensure their safety at all times (area for improvement 1).

Recently recruited support staff were undertaking children's personal care routines such as nappy changing whilst unsupervised. The management team were unclear on the staff members registration status with regulatory body Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and under which category of registration they would be expected to register. We asked the management team to review the job description, registration expectations and induction process for support staff to ensure they are deployed to undertake tasks relevant to their role and inline with their knowledge, skills and experience (area for improvement 1).

**Areas for improvement**

1. To ensure children are safely supervised, the provider and management team should ensure that staff are deployed across the service to meet the individual care needs of children. In addition, staff deployment should consider tasks relevant to the job role staff have been recruited to, as well as their knowledge, skills and 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 'My care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well' (HSCS 3.19).

## 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 the quality of children's experiences, staff should ensure that children are meaningfully involved in leading their play and learning through a balance of planned and spontaneous experiences. Children's choice should be promoted, and their learning and development extended through skilful staff interactions.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors" (HSCS 1.25).

**This area for improvement was made on 27 February 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

Whilst we observed some improvements to children leading their play, we found that there was not a sufficient balance of planned and spontaneous experiences to support children's learning and development. We found that the play experiences available did not always reflect children's ideas and interests and as a result, children were not fully supported or challenged to reach their full potential. Therefore this area for improvement is not met and is repeated within this report.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

The management team should continue to support improvement in the service by implementing quality assurance processes that involve, staff, parents and children.

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) and "I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed" (HSCS 4.23).

**This area for improvement was made on 27 February 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

The management team had not made significant progress with this area for improvement. Whilst staff were informally reflecting on their practice, this did not always lead to improvements. The management team were not monitoring aspects of service delivery and had not meaningfully consulted with staff, children and families to inform improvements. Therefore this area for improvement is not met and is repeated within this report.



## 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?	3 - Adequate
1.1 Nurturing care and support	3 - Adequate
1.3 Play and learning	3 - Adequate
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	3 - Adequate
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3 - Adequate
How good is our staff team?	3 - Adequate
4.3 Staff deployment	3 - Adequate

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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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