

# Kaimhill Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
5 December 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Aberdeen City Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000349

**Service no:**  
CS2003014437

## About the service

Kaimhill Primary School Nursery is provided by Aberdeen City Council. It is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children aged between 3 years and primary school entry at any one time. From 12 December 2024 until 4 July 2025 the service was also registered to be able to care for one school aged child.

The service operates from two open plan playrooms and a large cloakroom area within Kaimhill Primary School. The nursery has direct access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The school is situated within a residential area of Aberdeen. There is a car park to the front of the school and public transport links nearby. The accommodation is all at ground level.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 4 December 2024 from 10:35 - 18:00 and Thursday 5 December 2024 from 08:50 - 17:00. 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, 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.
- Spoke with one parent and received written feedback from three parents and carers.
- Spoke with staff and management.
- Observed practice and children's experiences.
- Reviewed documentation.

## Key messages

- Children were very well supported by staff who were consistently responsive to their needs.
- Good quality child led play, learning and development opportunities were available to children throughout the day
- Children enjoyed regular outdoor play which supported both their physical and mental positive wellbeing
- There was a clear commitment across the team to continual improvement which helped to ensure consistent high quality care, support and learning.
- Children were supported by a motivated and skilled staff team who worked together to provide high quality, inclusive experiences for all 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?	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?

4 - Good

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

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children benefited from a very nurturing and caring staff team who helped them to feel safe, secure and loved. Families were warmly welcomed into the nursery. A parent told us that "the staff are friendly and provide a welcoming atmosphere. They have worked well with us as parents to help my child settle." Staff were very attentive and responsive to children's individual and changing needs. For example, where children looking a little sad, they engaged positively with them, when wet through water play they were supported to get changed and be comfortable. Positive engagement also took place at the end of the session with staff sharing key information from the children's time at nursery. Relief staff, new to the setting, worked hard to build up trusting, positive relationships very quickly with the children.

Lunch was a positive experience. Staff sat with children and engaged with them. They carefully observed children and gently reminded them how to eat safely to reduce the risk of choking. There were opportunities for the children to develop their independence skills, for example by self-serving, pouring their own drinks and tidying away their plates, cutlery and cups. This could continue to be developed further, for example the children could be involved in cutting and preparing their own fruit.

There were quieter areas such as the story corner and sensory area in the cloakroom area which could be used for children who wanted to rest or sleep. To further promote wellbeing, these spaces could be made more cosy, homely and relaxing. Wall displays could be less busy and the area softened with drapes and subtle mood lighting.

Personal plans were detailed and evidenced that the team worked in full partnership with parents and carers to develop a holistic overview of each child's needs and how best to support these. This information was then used by staff in their practice. Information was updated as and when things changed and a more formal review took place every six months. This ensured that staff continued to know how best to support each child. Where children had additional support needs a more enhanced personal plan was also in place. These highlighted successful strategies that have been implemented and we saw examples of this during our observations. These could continue to be developed further. For example for some children it would be beneficial to include further information about known triggers and how to support the child when distressed. This would support staff when helping children to regulate their emotions.

Medication was found to have been recorded appropriately and stored in line with best practice. Detailed medical support plans were in place for children with medical needs to support effective and consistent care. Although medication was reviewed regularly it was not always done so in line with the services own medication policy. The management team advised that they would ensure this was actioned.

### 1.3 play and learning

Staff had been working on supporting the children to lead their own play and this was leading to positive outcomes. This had been an area identified for development in the nursery's improvement plan. Children were able to lead their own play both indoors and outdoors and were free to move between all the play

spaces. This promoted children's choice and independence. They were having fun and were engaged throughout the sessions.

Mathematical language was used regularly using natural opportunities during play which supported children's learning. Discussion took place about things being "bigger," "smaller" and "huge" for example. We also observed counting and measuring taking place in children's games and art activities.

Language and literacy was also supported through regular use of singing throughout the sessions. Some children also enjoyed listening to stories in small groups or on a one to one basis. A range of books were attractively presented and accessible to children in different areas of the nursery. Staff engaged very positively with children which also supported language development. Staff were using Makaton sign language to support children who had additional support needs, and this helped to support a more inclusive environment. Whilst a number of natural opportunities to support learning did take place there were some missed opportunities and this should continue to be developed.

There was some environmental print within the nursery setting however this could be further enhanced. For example, at the water and sand trays there were drawers with photos of resources inside but it would be beneficial to have the words too. In the art area there were pots named with different craft materials such as 'glue sticks' and 'crayons' however they were filled with items that did not match the name. All areas of the nursery would benefit from increased environmental print, such as maps and road signs in the construction area and catalogues, magazines and newspapers in the home corner.

There were opportunities for drawing, painting and junk modelling, which helped children to be creative and to develop their fine motor skills. One parent told us that their child "comes home with a drawing every day, he's always so proud." Some children were having a lot of fun junk modelling during our inspection and were proud of their achievements which were recognised by staff.

During school holiday periods, when sessions were quieter children had more opportunities to connect with the local community. They visited local parks, enjoyed nature walks along Old Deeside Railway and visited local shops. The team should continue to build on this to ensure that all children have the same opportunities to have these positive experiences in the community.

Children also regularly visited a nearby care home for older people where they met with residents and participated in shared activities. These inter generational opportunities supported the children with their communication and language skills, empathy, and confidence. It also supported enhanced wellbeing for both the children and the older people they were visiting.

The team had continued to develop how they supported children's learning through observations, planning and assessment. They had been trying different ways of doing this. They had a system in place to ensure that children all had an opportunity on a regular basis to have a clear focus on their learning, progress and identifying next steps. We saw observations of children's practice written up and shared on an online platform with parents and carers. Staff found the current system effective in tracking and supporting children's learning, however found the time needed to ensure the system worked well was challenging. The team may wish to review and reflect on this and make any positive changes.

## How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The nursery was a warm and welcoming space for the children to play and learn. The environment was well cared for, with good quality furnishings. There was plenty of natural light and good ventilation to support wellbeing. Plenty of play space was available to the children and this allowed them more flexibility in their play.

Well thought out spaces allowed a range of activities to take place and ensured there was always opportunities for children to be creative, curious, problem solve and have some quiet time.

The home corner was an inviting space however could provide increased play and learning opportunities by adding in more real life resources and loose parts. This would enable children to pour, measure, count, mix, chop and stir. It would support more creative role play, encouraging children to use their imagination and their problem solving skills.

Children who enjoyed sensory play could choose from a variety of sensory resources including play-doh, water, sand, gluing and painting activities in the main playroom. A parent told us that their child "loves to play with the play-doh and tells us about what he made." The team were currently working on supporting children to be more involved in developing the indoor space.

The cloakroom area was used for mealtimes and snack times which left the main playrooms fully available for play. The cloak room area was also well used outwith these key times as a quieter space for reading, relaxation, and regulating emotions.

There were some lovely and meaningful displays of the children's work displayed on some of the nursery walls. However we also found that other walls displayed high levels of information which may be overwhelming for some children. The use of more neutral colours, less busy wall displays and softer lighting would create a more positive environment to support children's emotional regulation.

The team recognised the importance of children having regular access to outdoor play to support both their physical and mental positive wellbeing. Free flow between indoors and outdoors provided plentiful opportunities for the children to be outdoors with. Children were supported very quickly when going outdoors and returning indoors to ensure they were comfortable.

The outdoor play area was well resourced with a range of loose parts to support children's creativity and problem solving skills. Children also very much enjoyed playing football and riding on the trikes which supported their gross motor skills. A parent told us that "The nursery garden is well equipped and from having opportunities to practice on balance bikes (my child's) confidence in using one has come a long way."

A sand pit and water play provided some outdoor sensory activities. A mud kitchen was in place, stocked with pots and pans and other kitchen utensils. It would benefit from being developed further to support opportunities for chopping, stirring, pouring, measuring.

Staff worked together to ensure a safe environment for the children, both indoors and outdoors. Equipment was well maintained; no obvious risks were observed and the premises were secure. Children were accounted for at all times through staff observing them closely, positioning themselves well and undertaking regular head counts.

Children were kept safe from the spread of infection through effective systems for food preparation and cleaning. Children knew their routines for how and when to wash their hands and were supported where this was needed.

## How good is our leadership?

**5 - Very Good**

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

### 3.1 quality assurance and improvement are led well

Children and families were supported by a leadership team that had a strong vision for the nursery and a positive approach to making improvements. They really welcomed feedback from stakeholders about how to improve the nursery further.

The team worked very well together and were committed to reflecting on their practice and making improvements. They had enjoyed and benefitted from networking with other nurseries, visiting each other's settings and sharing good practice and ideas for improvement. Peer observations were taking place on a regular basis to support improvement. We found that these were being used well to celebrate staff achievements. The team, however need to work on giving feedback to each other about what they could develop further.

Well attended, regular stay and play sessions provided an opportunity for feedback for parents and carers to provide feedback about the service, either verbally or by completing paper slips. Following feedback from families a box had been out in place in the nursery for feedback to be provided at any time.

Questionnaires were sent to parents and carers on a regular basis requesting feedback on key areas. Families engaged with these very well. Feedback was collated and then made available to parents and carers. Feedback was actioned however there currently wasn't a system in place to let families how their feedback was responded to. Implementing this would clearly evidence to families that they had been listened to and their feedback was valuable. The school parent council, on which the nursery was represented, provided another opportunity for feedback.

Children were informally consulted throughout our inspection visits about what they wanted to do and where they wanted to be. In addition, more formal feedback was encouraged in various ways, including twice yearly, through questionnaires about, for example, how safe children were feeling and how included they felt. Further discussion was then held with those children where their responses needed to be further explored. The team were continuing to reflect on how they received feedback from children and were introducing new ideas about how to strengthen this further.

A quality assurance calendar was in place and helped the leadership team to regularly monitor and audit the quality of the nursery and to support staff. This provided a clear overview of how the service was doing and what they could do better.

An improvement plan was in place for the nursery and actions within it were being progressed. The plan took account of feedback from children and their families, from staff, audits, observations and self-evaluation. An eBook was also in place, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement and showing the progression of improvements.

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

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

### 4.3 staff deployment

The nursery was appropriately staffed by a committed, motivated and experienced staff team. This helped to ensure that children received quality care and learning experiences and that they were kept safe. Consistently high levels of positive interaction with the children took place and staff were skilled at ensuring that all the children were included.

Busier periods of the day such as lunchtimes and dropping off/collection times were well planned. This ensured children's transitions were well supported.

Staff communicated well with each other throughout the sessions so that everyone was accounted for and tasks that required to be completed were actioned. Staff in supervisory roles were confident in providing clear direction to the staff team to ensure that the rooms were well organised and children's needs were being consistently met.

Staff were consistently positioned very well within the nursery so that children were always visible. This meant that staff were able to address potential hazards, resolve any disagreements and respond to changing needs promptly. This kept children safe and supported them to feel nurtured.

Relief staff were valued, welcomed and made to feel part of the team. Information about the general routines of the day and key information about children's individual needs was in place to help provide an overview to new and relief staff. Recent vacancies had meant that the service had been using more relief staff. The team did advise that this added additional pressure onto established staff who could not share out some of the duties and responsibilities. However, where possible, the same small group of relief staff were used and this provided some continuity of care for the children. Relief staff we observed during the inspection worked hard to build up relationships with the children and had a positive impact on outcomes for them.



## 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 support children to progress and achieve, staff should develop their skills and knowledge of:

- a. Observation, assessment and planning.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27).

**This area for improvement was made on 20 June 2019.**

#### Action taken since then

The team had continued to develop their knowledge and skills in relation to supporting children with their learning. Observations were taking place and were being used to help identify children's achievements, identify next steps and plan.

This area for improvement was found to have been met.

#### Previous area for improvement 2

The manager and staff should develop a welcoming, homely environment which contains a range of activities and experiences to include more open-ended resources and developmentally challenging experiences to enable children to develop skills in problem solving, imagination and curiosity to achieve their potential.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that:

'As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

**This area for improvement was made on 20 June 2019.**

#### Action taken since then

A welcoming and homely environment had been created. The range of open ended resources had been increased, particularly in the outdoor play area. Children were being challenged in their play and learning and were very much engaged during their time at nursery.

This area for improvement was found to have 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	5 - Very 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?	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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