

# Baluniefield Nursery Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
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**Service provided by:**  
Dundee City Council

**Service provider number:**  
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**Service no:**  
CS2021000174

## About the service

Baluniefield Nursery provides a daycare of children service in the Douglas area of Dundee. The nursery is a purpose built building with access to their enclosed outdoor space. The nursery is registered to provide an early learning and childcare service to a maximum of 104 children at any one time from the age of two years and those not yet attending primary school; of those 104 no more than 30 are aged two years.

The service is based in a residential area of Dundee and is close to local shops, parks, and other amenities. Children are cared for in two large play rooms with access to multiple rooms for activities or groups, separate area to have their meals and separate toilet facilities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection carried out by two inspectors, which took place on Monday 27 January 2025 and Tuesday 28 January 2025 between 09:00 and 16:00. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this 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 children using the service
- received feedback from ten families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children's play and learning experiences had been enhanced through a wide range of rich and stimulating resources across play spaces.
- Children's interests were developed further by skilled staff throughout the play spaces to help children develop their curiosity and imagination.
- Children experienced very warm, caring and nurturing support from staff who knew them well.
- Robust auditing systems were in place to ensure children were kept safe while they attended the service.
- Children were confident to lead and take ownership of their play and learning.
- Staff supported each other's wellbeing well and offered help and support when needed.
- Children experienced daily access to outdoor play and fresh air. This supported children's overall wellbeing.

## 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 found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### Quality indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced kind, warm, caring and nurturing interactions from staff. They were down at children's level engaging in play, learning and conversations. For example, when children were playing games on the floor. Staff and children were on the floor together discussing the rules and how they were going to take turns. Children were encouraged to play on their own with staff supporting if they needed it. This resulted in trusting relationships being developed and children felt respected.

Children's needs were met by staff who were seen to be responsive to them through their interactions. Staff knew children well and this helped them to know when to offer appropriate support, for example cuddles or distraction. Children were confident to come and ask for help if they needed it, for example when trying to put items of clothing on. These interactions helped children to feel loved and reassured.

Children had opportunities to develop their independence skills throughout the day. They were encouraged to put on their own outdoor clothing when accessing the outdoor space, wash their hands independently, use the bathroom when they needed to and choose where to play. As a result children were confident to manage and complete tasks on their own.

Children had individual care plans in place, where important information was gathered. These were reviewed at least every six months with parents or sooner if changes occurred. Additional plans were put in place to support the service to ensure they were meeting the needs of all children who attended. For example, strategies were highlighted to support them with social communication, emotional regulation and transactional support. We could see identified strategies used during staff practice and interactions with children. This gave children the opportunity to thrive at a pace that was right for them.

Nappy changing took place in a separate space, providing children with dignity and respect. Current best practice guidance was followed, for example the use of personal protective clothing. Next steps were explained to the child throughout the process. For example staff said "taking your nappy off now". This helped children to prepare for the next action the staff member was about to take. Children were asked for their permission sensitively if they would like to try the toilet or have their nappy changed. For example, the staff member got down to the child's level and lowered their voice when asking them. As a result, children were respected and valued.

Mealtimes was a sociable and unhurried experience for children. Children washed their hands before snack and lunch. Staff sat with children at the table and engaged in conversations of interest with them. For example, children were sharing their plans with a staff member for the afternoon and where they wanted to play. Opportunities to build life skills were promoted through self-serving such as, pouring their drinks, choosing their meals and dishing up their side dishes. Staff offered appropriate support to individual children when they needed it. Children were able to leave the table when they finished their meal to continue with their play. This supported children to eat at a pace that was right for them. As a result children had a positive mealtime experience.

Children and their families were kept safe by staff who were confident in child protection procedures. Annual training and refresher training were completed at least annually. A child protection flow chart was displayed for all staff to view and used to support with processes. A child protection policy was in place and identified different types of abuse and how to manage these concerns. All staff read and signed this policy. This ensured all staff were confident in how to manage concerns. As a result, children and their families were supported to be kept safe from harm.

### Quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning

Children were seen to be having fun and were fully engaged in their play and learning. Children had access to a variety of different resources that were developmentally appropriate. The interests of children were respected and extended further by skilled staff, with the use of open ended questions and technology. For example, children were interested in the weather. They displayed the information they had discovered on a low display board and celebrated their learning in a floorbook. Staff were skilled and used their experience to facilitate and enable children's learning and development. This resulted in children who were engaged in their play for extended periods of time.

Language, literacy and numeracy opportunities were provided to children throughout their learning environment. Resources were woven throughout the play spaces such as, puzzles, natural resources and loose parts. Children's different stages of development were well considered. For example, the use of signs, symbols and visuals supported all children to explore their play environment independently. Children were heard engaging in conversation with staff using mathematical language, for example "its tiny" and "it has three wheels". Another child was observed sticking bits of Sellotape together stating "Its not long enough, it needs to be longer". These opportunities helped children to develop their language and knowledge in a meaningful way.

Planning approaches were child centred and responsive to their interests. A careful balance of adult led and child initiated activities supported children's overall learning. The staff team met regularly throughout the week to evaluate areas looking for the 'Golden Thread' of learning and interests. The use of national frameworks and best practice documents supported the staff to understand the breadth of the experiences children had. Each area had their own planning folder, for example the outside area. This helped the team to keep track of individual children's learning and interests throughout the service to help children extend these further.

Children took ownership of their learning and proudly shared their 'journals' with visitors. High quality observations captured children's significant learning with meaningful and appropriate next steps. Children shared "come and see my learning" and another asked "do you want to see my observations". Journals were displayed at a low level with children's photograph and name displayed clearly. This allowed children to access these when they wished. As a result, children had ownership of their learning and celebrated their successes with others.

Children had opportunities to explore their local community, for example library trips and visits to the Dighty burn. Connections to the community were beginning to develop with parents groups and parental involvement. Careful consideration to the types of groups and times of groups available, such as cooking and art sessions had increased interest and involvement from parents. One parent told us, "my child very much enjoyed cooking over the holidays". Home visits had started for not only new children to the service but children who already attended. Staff visited their homes and delivered a 'Bookbug' session or took part in an activity. This helped to develop family engagement and relationships further.

## How good is our setting?

## 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a bright, comfortable and welcoming environment. The play rooms were clean and free from clutter and furnishings of a high standard. There was ample space for children to extend their play ideas both indoors and outdoors. The use of soft furnishings, displayed art work and pictures throughout the service gave children the message that they mattered.

Children benefited from direct access to a well-resourced outside space with free flow access. This provided children with healthy options for play, fresh air and to explore large physical movements. One parent told us, "My child loves playing in the sand pit and gardening". Another parent shared, "I really love that they have the opportunity to go outside regardless of the weather". Activities such as planting, painting and bug hotel building provided children with opportunities to develop new interests. Children from both rooms shared this large outside space. This helped them to build relationships with all staff and other children. As a result, children's needs were effectively supported throughout the service.

Children were kept safe while they explored their environments. Risks were assessed and documented in robust risk assessments, these were reviewed regularly. Children were involved in ongoing risk assessing. One child was heard telling a member of staff "look its wet, needs cleaned". Children were supported to take part in risky play with the use of large loose parts and climbing frames. Children were confident to take appropriate risks. They were starting to use SIMOA (Safety, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act) the Look, Think, Act campaign from the Care Inspectorate. This helped children to begin to understand how to identify risks in different environments.

Children's wellbeing was well supported through effective infection prevention control measures. A dedicated cleaner attended at lunch time to clean the toilets, touch points, sinks and empty bins. Staff monitored their areas and cleaned as they needed to. Children and staff washed their hands at appropriate times of the day, for example, before and after eating, after using the toilet and after outdoor play. This ensured the likelihood of the spread of infection was reduced.

Children benefitted from improvements in the outside environment that contributed to keeping children safe while they explored. The addition of the Willow around the fence has created a natural and calming outside learning space. Staff have their zones they are responsible for and were aware of which children were playing in these areas. A large range of resources were available to children, for example bikes, large sand and mud pit and loose parts. As a result, children were engaged and focused on their play.

## How good is our leadership?

## 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service had vision, values and aims which were in the early stages of being reviewed in consultation with children, families and staff. We would encourage you to continue with this to develop a shared vision.

This would ensure families expectations and the support the service can provide to families and children were clear and manageable.

Children and families were meaningfully involved in the service. Regular communications took place through email, phone calls, questionnaires and news letters. These forms of communications kept families up to date with the life of the service, for example important dates and learning focuses. Parents were welcomed into the service at drop off and pick up times and regular family groups were on offer to develop parent involvement. One parent told us, "I am allowed to be very involved as a part of the nursery service and can stay and play with my child at any time". Another parent shared, "we are always being encouraged to join the nursery for activities and asked our opinions". These opportunities allowed children to share their learning and environment regularly with their families.

New staff and supply staff were supported by a robust induction plan, which incorporates the National Induction resource. This was regularly revisited with management and staff to ensure staff were confident in their practice, knew the service and the children and helped identify areas for development. Staff shared "management make sure all staff understand their roles, giving training where needed". Another staff member shared, "All staff have an induction pack that is completed with senior management team and all new staff are supported by staff members". As a result, staff were confident to carry out their roles and responsibilities to ensure outcomes for children were improved.

Quality assurance systems were in place and supported the improvement journey of the service. Actions were broken down into daily, weekly and monthly tasks. For example, the monitoring and auditing of accidents, incidents and medication. Robust checks were in place that contributed to children being kept safe if they had an accident or if they required medication. A meaningful improvement plan was in place with priorities identified. For example, an area for improvement was 'maths and numeracy provocations'. Staff ensured these opportunities were inviting, were built on children's interests and woven throughout the environment. Children's progress was evaluated with staff and children at group time regularly. This helped staff to identify what was working well to ensure children had progressed.

Leadership roles were well established and staff had ownership of developing these further. For example, staff stayed in their areas for a year where they developed these spaces with the children. Staff delivered parent groups, such as 'Bookbug' sessions and yoga classes. These opportunities helped staff to build their confidence and share their skills and passions with others.

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

### Quality indicator 4.3 Staff deployment

Staff had a mix of knowledge, skills and experience. They were kind and nurturing towards children. Children and families were supported by staff members who knew them well. A parent told us, "They are wonderful, always helpful and so involved with the children". Another parent shared, "Excellent relationship, very supportive and successful with my child's development". As a result, positive relationships had been formed with families.

Staff worked well together as a team and effectively communicated with each other. For example, staff asked for help or offered help when needed.

They were flexible and ensured they supported each other, for example changing lunch breaks. Staff were passionate about supporting one another and their wellbeing. One staff member shared, "When I need support with a situation I am finding challenging, my colleagues are very supportive and helpful". Another staff member shared, "one to one meetings with manager are had regularly to support my wellbeing". This contributed to strong working relationships and effective team working supported them to deliver positive outcomes for children.

Staff were appropriately deployed throughout the service to meet children's needs. Busier times of the day such as staff breaks did not impact on children's outcomes or experiences. Staff consistently monitored where children were playing and took regular head counts. This helped to keep children safe while they were in the service.

Staff undertook regular training that linked to children's needs or identified improvements. For example, Sensory processing, Bookbug at home, Environment as the Third Educator, Child protection and Medication training were completed by staff. Staff shared that they regularly evaluated their training to ensure their practice and children's experiences had improved. This helped to embed continuous development throughout the whole team and provided consistent care where children could thrive and achieve.

## 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

Children should consistently experience nurturing approaches to meet their care and wellbeing needs. To achieve this, staff should increase their understanding of interaction and strategies, to support the needs of children effectively and safely.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

**This area for improvement was made on 9 May 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

All staff had undertaken training to support them to improve their practice around respectful and positive interactions with children. Individual support plans were developed further to ensure all staff were aware of how to support individual children. The use of lanyards with signs and symbols were used by all staff to help children with transitions and their understanding. Staff were seen consistently supporting each other and children in a respectful and safe way.

**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?	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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