

Ben Wyvis Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Ben Wyvis Primary School
Leanaig Road
Conon Bridge
Dingwall
IV7 8BE

Telephone: 01349 860 940

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 January 2025

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2003017190

About the service

Ben Wyvis Primary School Nursery is a day care of children service situated in a new, purpose built extension to the school building, in the village of Conon Bridge. The service provides a breakfast club, early learning and childcare and after school care.

The service is registered to provide a care service for a maximum of 80 children aged three years to attending primary school. The service is situated in a residential area close to the village centre near local shops and other amenities. The children are cared for in two inter-connecting playrooms and have access to an enclosed outdoor area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 28 January 2025, between 08:10 and 16:30, and Wednesday 29 January 2025, between 08:30 and 12:30. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with three family members of people using the service
- reviewed 13 responses to our MS Forms survey of family members of people using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily experiences
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children's overall wellbeing was supported through effective use of personal planning enabling staff to provide high quality care.
- Snack and mealtimes were calm, sociable, enjoyable experiences for children, where staff consistently sat eating with children, which promoted positive relationships and learning from discussions.
- Children experienced a very good balance of high quality planned and spontaneous play and learning experiences which were interesting, fun and stimulating.
- Children's health and wellbeing benefitted from well-established and effective infection prevention and control routines.
- Robust quality assurance processes supported the service to deliver high quality care and support tailored to meet children's and families' needs.
- The approach to staff deployment was outcome focused which meant that staff were meeting the needs of children through effective individualised support and supervision.

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.

1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

Children were nurtured as they experienced caring, responsive, and compassionate interactions which supported their wellbeing. Children attending breakfast and out of school care were welcomed by staff who knew them well which promoted a warm, nurturing ethos. Staff were tuned in to children's cues for support and responded to these, giving children the message they were valued and loved. Parents and carers were welcomed daily into the ELC playrooms. They told us, "Staff are always welcoming and allow you to stay and play often, or if needed for your child to settle," and "we are warmly welcomed every day."

Children's overall wellbeing was supported through effective use of personal planning. Comprehensive information supported children's identified needs. The service worked in partnership with parents and other professionals to share and regularly review information. As a result, staff had a very good knowledge of children's holistic needs, which enabled them to provide high quality care.

Children's security and independence were nurtured by staff supporting personal care routines. Since our last inspection, additional staffing meant that supervision of children in the toilet and cloakroom area was effective. This supported children's privacy and dignity to be respected, and enabled staff to foster children's independence skills.

Snack and mealtimes were calm, sociable, enjoyable experiences for children. Children attending breakfast and out of school care were encouraged to serve themselves from a good variety of healthy eating choices. Children in the ELC playrooms were supported to be involved in the preparation and serving of snack. This supported the development of independence skills.

Improvements to children's lunch time experience had brought a number of benefits. Transitions to and from lunch had been developed to ensure children did not wait for long periods of time. Some children benefitted from eating in the smaller canteen before transitioning to the larger school. This meant they experienced a quieter, more peaceful environment. Opportunities for children to be involved in their lunch experience had been increased. For example, children were able to collect their own cutlery and pour water or milk independently. Staff consistently sat with children throughout mealtimes, eating with the children, which promoted positive relationships and learning, with discussions taking place.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported by systems in place to manage medication. Recorded information corresponded, which meant that children received the correct medication and the right care. Staff were responsive to children's emotional needs. Staff provided adaptations to children with identified needs or those who were easily overwhelmed and needed support to regulate.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children experienced a very good balance of high quality planned and spontaneous play and learning experiences which were interesting, fun and stimulating. Planned activities and experiences were appropriate to children's developmental stages across the service. Children attending the breakfast club and out of school care had influenced the activities on offer. Some children chose to draw or colour in while others played physical games.

While outdoor play was not accessible to breakfast club children, alternatives had been put in place. For example, older children were able to join peers in the playground just before the school day began.

Children's play experiences were enhanced by skilful staff interactions which were encouraging and enabling. This meant children were able to make choices about how they wanted to learn, create and play. Staff interactions were consistent across the team and enriched learning by challenging children's thinking.

Children's play and learning in the ELC playrooms benefitted from an interesting, exciting, engaging environment, both indoors and outdoors. Resources reflected children's current learning interests. We saw examples of science, numeracy and cultural learning through play, supported by the resources available for children to select independently. Children were able to follow their curiosity and implement their ideas, leading to truly child-led play and activities.

Children attending out of school care were happily engaged in play activities of their choosing, indoors and outdoors. They had input into the types of activities and resources available. With staff support, they were in the early stages of planning the introduction of loose parts and more open-ended play opportunities to their outdoor area. This could foster increased opportunities for problem solving and creativity.

Children's current play and learning interests were reflected in the planning which was recorded in floorbooks. The high quality floorbooks were rich with information about children's learning. This child-centred approach meant that learning was relevant to children's interests and life experiences. The service had identified the development of more personalised high quality observations as an improvement priority. The service was in the early stages of developing observations to consistently capture individual's knowledge, skills and understanding, and to identify appropriate next steps.

Children's literacy, language and numeracy knowledge and skills were well supported through some of the play and learning experiences on offer. Staff had been developing further opportunities for children to engage in literacy and numeracy experiences and activities across the setting. This was evident in the support and quality interactions children experienced. For example, children had created a long paper snake. Staff responded to a child's question about how long the snake was by helping the children measure themselves along the length of the snake. This enabled the children to understand the length in comparison to themselves. This understanding was supported and enriched by the learning conversations with staff.

Children's literacy and language development was supported by the provision of appropriate resources across the setting and the interactions of staff. Areas with adult sized sofas provided a place for children to comfortably enjoy having a story read to them. Staff were able to read to children on demand. Quieter cosy spaces also provided children with access to books. There were opportunities to paint, draw and make marks, indoors and outdoors, encouraging early writing skills.

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.

Children experienced a setting which was comfortable, had plenty of natural light and was neutrally decorated and furnished. Free-flow play between indoors and outdoors was available which provided ample opportunities for physical play. Free-flow play was well managed throughout the day to support children's safety and security. Staff had worked hard to improve the overall appeal and resourcing of areas in the playrooms for ELC children since our last inspection.

Children's current interests were reflected in the resources provided and stimulating invitations to play. More comfortable inviting spaces had been created which were developmentally appropriate and promoted a homely feel. This impacted positively on children's play and care experiences. Overall, the setting, indoors and outdoors was well maintained, and welcoming spaces had been created throughout the service. This sent the message to children that they mattered and were valued.

Children's health and wellbeing benefitted from well-established and effective infection prevention and control routines. All children washed their hands on arrival, whether attending breakfast club, ELC or out of school care. This was well supported by staff. Children were generally supported to use respiratory hygiene for coughs and sneezes.

Children's play and learning experiences were supported by the accessibility and choice of resources. This promoted independence and meant that children could actively follow their ideas because they could self-select the resources they wanted. The provision of open ended-and natural resources enabled children to play creatively and to follow their curiosity. Children attending breakfast and out of school care were able to access a good variety of resources to suit a range of ages and interests. The layout and invitations to play set up by staff in the ELC playrooms reflected younger children's current interests.

Children were supported to rest or to enjoy a quieter space when needed as consideration had been given to creating cosy, inviting spaces. When attending breakfast club or out of school care children could choose how to create their own cosy spaces with blankets, cushions and beanbags. Individual needs had been considered in the development of the environment. The service was in the process of developing a nurture room as they had identified that some children could find busier spaces in the setting overwhelming. This meant that all children could access play and learning in a way which suited them.

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.

Children's outcomes and experiences were influenced by the ethos of the service which reflected the values of the service. This was demonstrated in several ways including staff interactions with children and families. For example, there were several examples of how families were supported to be connected to the service. Meaningful family involvement was promoted throughout the service with families able to access Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP) sessions. There was also a second-hand uniform bank and regular stay and play sessions. This helped enable the service to meet the needs of their community.

Robust quality assurance processes supported the service to deliver high quality care and support tailored to meet children's and families' needs. For example, auditing tools had been used successfully to identify and implement improvements to the environment. A continual process of self-evaluation supported staff to reflect on what was working well and to identify where further changes were needed to improve children's experiences and outcomes. Parents told us they were sent surveys and that there was a self-evaluation board in the main entrance. A parent reported, "All our views are welcomed." Professionals visiting the service had been invited to complete a survey. The senior practitioner had acted on feedback given. The service demonstrated the importance of actioning next steps identified to enable a steady pace of improvement to be maintained. This supported positive impacts on children's experiences and outcomes.

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.

Children's experiences and needs benefitted from staff deployment which had been considered across the day to provide a balance of staff experience and skills. The staff told us about the support they gain from each other. A supportive induction process was in place for relief staff. For example, there were details about how to carry out tasks, risk assessments and strategies to meet individual needs. This enabled them to meet children's needs.

The approach to staff deployment was outcome focused. This meant that staff were meeting the needs of children through effective individualised support and supervision. This promoted children's independence and supported children's wellbeing and safety.

Across the service staff communicated well and respectfully with each other. They were proactive and communicated to colleagues if a task took them away from their responsibilities. This supported children's continuity of care throughout their day. Staff worked well together to ensure quality engagement with children.

We acknowledged that managing staff absences continued to be a challenge across the service. This was well managed with the service by using familiar relief staff where possible to minimise disruption to children's care, play and learning. ELC staff were often willing to provide cover for colleagues in out of school care. Families were informed of staff changes via the whole school newsletter.

Busier times of the day were well planned for to support transitions for children and families. Informal opportunities for families to meet and speak with staff were created as families were welcomed into the setting each day. Staff were on hand to support positive transitions and families could see play and learning first hand.

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 enable all children to be cared for in an environment that supports them to reach their full potential, the management team and staff should as a minimum ensure play spaces offer a range of resources and materials to effectively challenge and stimulate children and reflect their current interests and curiosities. This should include, but is not limited to, increasing the range of loose parts, open ended and natural materials.

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 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 7 September 2023.

Action taken since then

Children were having fun exploring play in an environment which supported them to follow their curiosity and actively lead their play. The service had used two environment auditing tools to undertake full audits of their environment, indoors and outdoors. As a result, defined areas indoors and outdoors were well resourced which promoted challenge, imagination and creativity in children's play. Children were able to access resources in each area. Sufficient resources to stimulate and sustain play. This was further enhanced by skilful use of quality interactions by staff. Some children were deeply engaged in play for longer periods of time.

In addition, other quality assurance processes enabled the staff to see where changes would have the greatest impact on children's play and learning experiences.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure that all children receive consistently high quality care, play and learning experiences, the management team should monitor children's needs and review the balance of staff skills and knowledge across the setting. Where appropriate, changes should be made to meet children's needs.

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 7 September 2023.

Action taken since then

Children's play, care and wellbeing were well supported by the right number of staff. A well considered approach to staff deployment led to improved outcomes for children. For example, children's needs were well supported by a member of staff dedicated to supporting personal care and effective handwashing. This enabled children to feel secure and supported the development of independence skills.

Reviewing staff deployment meant that transitions were smoother for children. For example, children were no longer waiting in a line for long periods of time between finishing play and going for lunch. This made for a quicker, smoother transition to lunch resulting in a calmer experience for children.

The leadership team had reviewed the deployment of staff to ensure a balance of skills and experience. Children with identified support needs were well supported. This enabled them to engage well with play and peers in a way which suited them.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To help children to reach their potential, the service should ensure that an effective cycle of high-quality observations supports and meets individual learning and development needs. This should include but is not limited to:

- a) identifying key learning and next steps for individuals
- b) providing a balance of responsive and intentional planning to provide opportunities which support the learning and development of all children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) 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 6 March 2023.

Action taken since then

Children's play and learning experiences benefitted from an embedded approach to intentional and responsive planning. Observations of children's play and the highly effective use of floor books supported this approach to planning. For example, floorbooks recorded statements of general play observations, evidence of developing skills and the knowledge children shared during learning conversations with staff.

The service were continuing to develop their process for consistently recording learning, and identifying meaningful next steps to support effective individual progress. Staff demonstrated through their practice that they knew the learning needs of the children. Children's developing knowledge, understanding and skills were not yet consistently captured in observations for individual children. The service had identified this as a next step for improvement.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To keep children safe and healthy and to promote their wellbeing, the service should improve infection prevention and control measures.

This includes but is not limited to:

- a) providing children with utensils to self-serve snack to prevent cross-contamination of food
- b) ensuring that correct hand washing routines are established and maintained, according to infection prevention and control guidance
- c) items, such as water bottles, which have been stored and used in general areas are not used at tables where food is served.

This is to ensure that infection prevention and control practices are consistent with the NHS Scotland document: 'Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings (Day Care and Childminding Settings)'.

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 based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 6 March 2023.

Action taken since then

Improvements to infection prevention and control practice supported children's health and wellbeing. Effective, regular handwashing routines were embedded into children's daily routines.

Staff positioned themselves so they were able to support consistently good handwashing technique at the right times. For example, after playing outdoors and before and after eating food.

Children were independently selecting food items at snack times by using utensils. A member of staff sat with the children as they ate which meant they were on hand to support. This meant that children were able to serve food safely as the risk of cross contamination was reduced.

Children drank water or milk from cups when eating snack or lunch. At other times they were encouraged to drink fresh water. A jug of fresh water with clean cups, as well as the children's own water bottles, were accessible to children throughout the day. Staff regularly encouraged children to drink. As a result children were supported to be hydrated.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

To ensure that children benefit from improvements which have the greatest positive impacts on their experiences and outcomes, the service should ensure that they have robust quality assurance processes in place.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) regular opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation of practice
- b) regular monitoring of staff practice to identify good quality skills and practice as well as training needs
- c) regular monitoring of the quality of children's experiences
- d) identifying measurable impacts that will benefit children's experiences and outcomes
- e) meaningful opportunities for children and parents to be involved and influence change.

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 6 March 2023.

Action taken since then

Children's experiences and outcomes were positively influenced by the implementation and embedding of robust quality assurance processes. Staff had regular opportunities to engage in a continual process of self-evaluation. This supported staff to reflect on what was working well and to identify where further changes were needed to improve children's experiences and outcomes.

Children's experiences and outcomes benefitted from the impact of good quality staff skills and practice. Consideration had been given to the deployment of staff to reflect the range of knowledge, skills and practice across the team. The manager had implemented a system for monitoring the quality of children's experiences. This helped to ensure that children's overall experiences and support met individual needs and learning. Where any gaps were highlighted by this process, the manager and staff were able to address them.

Measurable impacts that benefitted children's experiences and outcomes were evident in the ELC floorbooks. Child-led experiences had increased since our last visit. As a result, children were receiving a good balance of intentional and responsive activities and experiences. These reflected their current interests and delivered learning at a suitable pace for their stage of development.

Children's experiences and outcomes benefitted from opportunities for them and their families to be meaningfully involved in changes to the service. Staff supported the children's voice to influence the development of play opportunities at breakfast and out of school care. This meant that children were enabled to enjoy play and activities that reflected their interests and needs. Families had opportunities to be meaningfully involved in the service. Parents told us they were sent surveys and that there was a self-evaluation board in the main entrance. The delivery of the service's Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP) sessions had been adjusted to accommodate a greater number of interested parents. This demonstrated the service's ability to respond to the needs of the children and families in their community.

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.

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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Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

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