

# Crieff Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
29 January 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Perth & Kinross Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003370

**Service no:**  
CS2003016093

## About the service

Crieff Primary School Nursery is day care of children service, registered to provide care to a maximum of 74 children at any one time; from age 2 years to an age to attend primary school; of whom no more than 10 may be aged 2 - 3 years.

The nursery operates from a primary school in the rural area of Crieff, Perthshire. The children are accommodated within two playrooms designated for different age groups of children. There is a small office and a separate staff room. The children have access to a fully enclosed outdoor area that is accessible from the main playroom. The nursery has a secure door entry system in place.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 28 and 29 January 2025 between 09:15 and 16:15. Two inspectors carried out the inspection.

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.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with seven children using the service
- received 25 completed questionnaires from parents, carers and staff
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

Children benefitted from mostly nurturing care and support. Families were supported to be involved across different aspects of their child's care and support which enhanced positive attachments.

Staff had a good understanding of child development, relevant theory and practice.

The service were developing their planning approaches to support high quality care, play and learning.

The setting and equipment was safe. Some play spaces and items had become tired and were due to be repaired or replaced. Staff were eager to address this to ensure children's environment was well-maintained.

The management team were well organised and had good quality assurance systems which supported self evaluation. Improvement priorities could be better recorded to promote sharing with children and families.

The deployment of the staff team enabled them to be fully engaged and present in children's care, play and learning. Parents were able to share the positive impact they had had on their children's experience and outcomes.

## 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.

### Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff mostly led with warm and kind interactions which included, providing children with comfort and engaging with them at their level. One parent told us, "Staff are always available and I know just from their interactions that my child is very well cared for in the setting". On a few occasions, staff took a few children by the wrist to move them, which at times took away their right to choose and disempowered them. Managers and staff were reflective and as a result, interactions were more respectful and empowering on the second day of inspection.

Children's wellbeing benefitted from effective personal planning. Staff worked closely with parents to ensure key information was recorded to promote care and support that was right for them. Comments from parents included, "We had a very productive meeting regarding my child's progress, I felt our feelings were listened to and considered" and "My child's key worker communicates really well with me about my child's progress and is aware and so helpful of the things we are working on at home. I feel they have made a real difference in my child's experience and progress. I feel like they care". Staff used tailored strategies to support children's care. These were recorded as part of personal planning to promote consistency of care.

Most parents felt they were involved in children's experiences. One parent shared that, "We have been welcomed in for a 'stay and play' both terms that my child has attended which has been great to see how they are settling in and what they have been up to". Newsletters and family information evenings also took place to provide more opportunities for engagement. This supported families to be involved across different aspects of their care and support and enhanced positive attachments. Some parents told us they would like more time at the end of the day to hear about their children's care, play and learning. This would further enhance positive relationships and support effective communication.

Children experienced mealtimes that were calm and sociable. Children were seen to be happy and comfortable during this time, speaking with friends and enjoying their food. Staff facilitated this experience well by sitting with children and providing help when needed. This promoted healthy eating habits and kept children safe.

Staff had a good knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities in safe guarding children. Chronologies were in place for all children. As a result, significant events which could impact on children's well-being were recorded. This supported staff to identify where targeted support may benefit children, enabling them to achieve.

### Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had opportunities for spontaneous and planned experiences and were involved in leading their play. For example, children had exciting and fun opportunities to explore and take part in adventurous play in the woods. One child told us, "I like it when you get to hug a friendly tree". Families were positive about the outdoor play and learning experiences their children had. One parent told us, "My child has thoroughly enjoyed the couple of opportunities they have had at forest school". This promoted curiosity, enquiry and problem solving and provided children with opportunities to push their own boundaries and build self-confidence.

Children had good opportunities to develop their language, literacy and numeracy skills. For example, mark making with chalk and creating their own plans for their day at nursery. There was scope to further immerse these opportunities to create a rich, stimulating learning environment.

Most staff had a good understanding of child development, relevant theory and practice, and used this to support quality play and learning experiences. Some use of effective questioning extended children's thinking and supported some stimulating and challenging play and learning experiences. For example, one child built a large building from loose parts. Staff showed genuine interest and supported the child to describe and celebrate their creation. A few families commented that staff were very attuned to their child's communication style. This supported children to feel safe and ready to play and learn.

Children benefitted from a good sense of community. They had visited local areas, nearby shops, garden centres and regularly take part in intergenerational visits with a local community group. Staff recognised the value in these opportunities to provide rich learning experiences. For example, one parent told us, "my child loves cooking and loved the trip to Aldi to buy the ingredients for soup and porridge". As a result, children were exploring their wider world, while developing a sense of belonging within their community.

Staff were knowledgeable about children's overall development. Observations of children's play and learning were recorded and shared with families through an online platform. Observations did not always demonstrate children's significant individual learning. This meant that children's achievements and development may not always be fully recognised.

### 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.

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

The setting was well furnished and benefitted from plenty of natural light. The entrance was welcoming for children, families and visitors. It was decorated to provide useful information such as, up and coming events, service improvement plan and staffing information. This enabled a positive ethos that encouraged everyone to feel included in the service. Children would benefit from additional homely touches in some areas, such as soft lighting and fabrics, to enhance their sense of comfort and enclosure.

Children had choice and independence about their play indoors and moved freely and confidently between areas. They had direct access to the garden and benefitted from free flow opportunities between the indoors and outdoors. Children had ample space and were enabled to direct their own play and learning, as resources were easily accessible and developmentally appropriate. Most areas of the setting were well used, for example, children enjoyed creating a picnic area, taking items from the home corner and setting up cushions for their adventure. Children would benefit from additional real life resources in some areas to enhance their play and learning experiences.

Staff encouraged children to share their thoughts and opinions when completing risk assessments. This enabled staff to have a deeper understanding of the safety of the environment from the child's perspective. Children, when appropriate, were trusted to assess their own abilities when it came to risky play such as, climbing. Staff intervened where necessary to manage risk and support children to navigate safely. Children were clearly proud of their skills and enjoyed showing their friends what they could do. This resulted in children gaining a sense of responsibility and achievement.

The setting and equipment were safe. Some play spaces and items had become tired and were due to be repaired or replaced. Staff were eager to address this to ensure children's environment was well-maintained.

Children were supported to be healthy through effective infection prevention and control procedures. Handwashing took place by children and staff at appropriate times. This helped to minimise the risk of spread of infection.

## 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.

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

Children's experiences and care were enhanced through the shared vision and values of the staff team. Staff continually monitored these to ensure they worked well for the children, families and staff within the service.

Children were involved in the development of their service and could influence change. Staff listened to their views and opinions through mind mapping and daily conversations. This showed children that their voices mattered and that they were key contributors to the care they received.

Most parents and carers agreed or strongly agreed that their opinions were listened to and used to develop the service. Staff told us they were proud of their positive relationships with families and were always looking for ways to build on this. It was evident that feedback was regularly sought following stay and plays, and displays were used to share key information. This resulted in a good level of involvement with families.

There was an improvement plan in place. This was a whole school approach, with good consideration of early learning and childcare. Priorities for improvement were based on information gathered about the service. For example, feedback from children, families and staff was taken into account as well as following current guidance. As a result, there was a positive cycle of improvement within the service. Staff were working on improving the effectiveness planning for children's experiences and creating nurturing mealtimes. One parent was unaware of changes in the service. They told us, "at the moment nothing has changed to be involved in to develop the service". Staff were committed to engaging families and supporting them to be included in developments.

Reflective practices were embedded throughout the staff team. Staff met regularly as a team, for example, in planning reviews and professional development sessions, to reflect on children's care, play and learning experiences. Evaluations were found to be honest and valuable in raising standards. Staff told us they felt appreciated and listened to by management, which enabled them to feel empowered. This contributed to a good cycle of continuous improvement in the service.

### 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.

#### Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff were warm, welcoming and engaged positively in the inspection process. It was evident through discussions that they were committed and enthusiastic professionals. We found evidence of effective teamworking throughout the nursery. As a result, children received good quality care, play and learning experiences.

The knowledge and skills of staff across the whole day had a positive impact on children. They used their initiative to ensure children were safe and well supported. The majority of staff were observed engaging well with children, ensuring they were down at their level, listening to them and valuing their views and opinions. Staff were keen to support one another and communicated effectively to ensure the children were well cared for.

The staff routinely engaged in a range of professional learning activities that built on and sustained their practice. We found staff were confident in discussing how they had improved their practice as a result of their own professional learning activities. This learning had a positive impact on the quality of experiences for children, their progress and wider improvements in the setting.

The deployment of the staff team enabled them to be fully engaged and present in children's care, play and learning. We observed staff maintaining good supervision through effective communication. A parent told us, "my child seems to have a great relationship with the staff and there is always someone there for them if they need help. They come back home able to tell us all about the conversations and activities with staff members". As a result, staff were able to meet children's needs without compromising on other's experiences.

Staff told us they felt supported in their roles. They felt that they received supportive feedback on their work and felt able to approach the leadership team for support or with ideas to improve the service. Staff told us that they were able to share their views and their own wellbeing was well considered. This contributed to a positive ethos within the service.

## 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

The provider should improve planning processes to ensure play and learning experiences are relevant and responsive to children's ideas and stage of development.

This is to ensure 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 24 April 2018.**

#### Action taken since then

Children benefitted from play and learning experiences that were developmentally appropriate. Staff were attuned to their cues and responded well to support children's choice. They demonstrated their commitment to developing planning approaches to ensure they were responsive to children's views, needs and ideas.

**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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