

# Auchtergaven Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

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

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003370

**Service no:**  
CS2003016070

## About the service

Auchtergaven Primary School Nursery is a day care of children service and is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 22 children at any one time.

Nursery children are cared for in a classroom within Auchtergaven primary school in the village of Bankfoot. The nursery has a separate secure entrance for children and their families. Children have access to their own toilet facilities and access to a large outdoor area within the school's playground. The service is provided by Perth and Kinross council.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 5 and 6 March 2025. 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, 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 and two of their family members
- reviewed three responses to our questionnaire
- spoke with staff and the manager
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

## Key messages

- Children were happy, settled and enjoying their time at nursery, it was evident they loved and trusted staff.
- Staff morale was high. They were skilled, knowledgeable, and reflective practitioners who worked well together and identified strongly with children, families, and the service.
- Effective staff deployment ensured children were always very well supervised and supported appropriately.
- Children could be offered more challenge through their resources and experiences both indoors and outside in the nursery garden.
- We encouraged the manager to continue to embed systems in practice to ensure their self-evaluation and quality assurance was robust, effective, and provided a steady pace of change.
- Families valued the positive relationships between staff and their children.
- Staff had high aspirations for children and their love and support was having a positive impact on their wellbeing and their time at nursey.
- A real strength of the service was the wealth of opportunities offered to children to support and develop their early skills in language, literacy, and numeracy.

## 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?	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, and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality indicator 1.1. Nurturing care and support

Children were cared for by staff who were kind, fun, caring, and friendly. We saw children were excited to see staff in different areas of play. They excitedly ran up to them to give them a cuddle, to which staff responded to affectionately. Staff warmly told us of children's individual personalities, likes and dislikes and it was evident they knew children very well. This resulted in children being happy, settled, and confident. Families held the staff team in high regard and valued the positive relationships staff and their children had formed. Their comments included, 'The staff are lovely, really helpful and they go above and beyond', 'The staff know our child better than we do', 'My child has a great bond with all the staff, you can't fault them' and 'All staff are lovely'.

Staff interactions with children were consistently positive, and nurturing, throughout the inspection. They were respectful, patient and meaningfully listened to children's ideas and requests. Children reciprocated this positive approach, they were happy, polite, and clearly trusted staff. Staff had high aspirations for children and their love, support, and caring manner towards the children was having a positive impact on their wellbeing and their time at nursery. Children told us, 'The ladies give us lots of cuddles,' 'They keep us safe' and 'They make us happy.'

Effective personal planning created in partnership with families reflected the holistic needs of each child which supported their wellbeing. Children who experienced challenges were cared for by staff who demonstrated a commitment to collaborating with other professionals to meet their individual needs. Early intervention and on-going assessment meant all children were included in nursery experiences and receiving care that was right for them. This supported them to flourish and thrive and enjoy their time at nursery.

Children experienced relaxed and unhurried snack and mealtimes. They were provided with opportunities to develop self-help skills, responsibility, and independence. For example, they self-served, poured their own drinks, and cleared away their plates. Staff sat with children which helped build attachments and develop language skills which impacted positively on their health and wellbeing. On a few occasions some staff became task oriented. We encouraged the service to continue to monitor the lunchtime experience to ensure all children consistently received a positive learning experience.

Effective procedures were in place to safeguard children. Staff were knowledgeable on how to respond if they had concerns around a child's wellbeing and welfare. Accident, incident, medication, and allergy systems were all managed very well. This contributed to keeping children safe.

Staff had developed meaningful relationships with families. They were invited into the nursery to talk to children about their professions and volunteered to help with the 'Play on pedals' initiative. They helped renovate the nursery garden and attended play and stay sessions and fund-raising events. Families we spoke with told us, 'We feel involved and informed,' 'I know what is happening in nursery and I feel fully included in my child's experiences' and 'I am currently volunteering to help with cycling sessions. I have also

been into nursery to read stories.' This told us families felt involved and had developed strong connections with the setting.

Quality indicator 1.3. Play and learning.

Staff provided children with responsive and mostly planned play experiences which supported them to be engaged in their play in a meaningful way. We agreed that aspects of planning was a description of the day's activities, and did not always respond to children's current interests or inform plans for the following week. With support from the local authority the staff were reviewing their planning process. We were confident this would support planning to be child centred and promote richer learning experiences and spaces.

Children benefitted from a small group time with their keyworker, they were learning new skills, for example, first aid and turn taking. Following their key group activities, they were brought together into a larger group time. At this time, we saw some children became disengaged in their activities. We asked the service to consider the length of time children's play was interrupted to join group activities.

A strength of the service was their approach to developing children's early skills in language, literacy, and numeracy. Staff's confidence had been enhanced through leadership roles in developing these specific areas. An interesting numeracy area engaged children in sorting and matching activities and mathematical language and numeracy was evident around the environment. A focus on words, for example 'upset, lost and where' were naturally woven into conversations with children and their emergent writing was respectfully displayed around the playroom. This resulted in children experiencing a vocabulary and numerical rich environment which captured their curiosities.

An online digital platform shared children's successes with families. Observations of children's achievements were individual and focused on learning. Staff tracked children's progress very well which helped them to identify the specific needs of children. This meant individualised support was planned for and most children were working towards meaningful and appropriate next steps. Children's next steps were attractively displayed in a child friendly format. One child showed us the display and told us, 'Here's my next step, I'm working on my numbers one to ten.'

Children's participation in a variety of experiences was evidenced within a floor book. We saw staff revisited previous activities with the children who enthusiastically remembered their learning. We noted some entries were descriptions of activities and there was scope to enhance how children's views and opinions contributed to learning. The staff were keen to further develop the floor book to evidence depth and progression in learning and empower children to have more ownership of their play.

Children enjoyed regular activities within their local area. For example, they participated in a foodshare scheme run by local community volunteers. Children collected ingredients for baking from the food share and returned their baking for local residents to select from the pantry. They attended a bingo tea to raise funds for the school and regularly walked round the village, visited the local park and woodland areas. These experiences helped develop children's connections to their local and wider communities.

**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.

Children were cared for in a classroom within the school. It was welcoming, well-ventilated and play spaces had been well thought out. Children had space to play and moved around areas with ease and confidence. We encouraged the staff to open the blinds and soften the lighting to help create a more ambient and calmer atmosphere.

Children moved confidently between the indoor and outdoor spaces and were regularly out playing in the nursery garden experiencing physical play and exercise. The large, open space provided children with fun, and interesting experiences. They climbed and jumped off large loose parts, explored nature, played on a tyre swing, and engaged in sensory play in the mud kitchen. A small wooden hut furnished with cushions allowed children to have some quieter and alone time in warmer surroundings. Children had fun playing outdoors in the fresh air. They told us, 'It is fun out here, we run and jump and play with our friends,' 'I like the bikes and climbing' and 'That swing is so much fun.'

We asked the manager and staff team to consider reviewing how they used and structured both the indoor and outdoor spaces. This would help them provide more materials and resources to support play and learning.

Resources and activities were age and stage appropriate, and a good range of real-life experiences, loose parts and natural materials inspired children's curiosities. Children played cooperatively together and were empowered to choose activities independently. There was scope to provide children with more challenge both indoors and outside in the nursery garden. Providing children with opportunities for enquiry, problem solving and investigation will support them further to reach their full potential.

Children's health and wellbeing was protected as staff had a good understanding of infection prevention and control practices. For example, hand washing routines were embedded in practice and the service was tidy, and well organised. The kitchen area and children's toilet facilities had been renovated to a high standard since the previous inspection. An external cleaner managed the cleanliness of these areas, and we agreed with the manager the toilet floor was visibly unclean. The manager had raised their concerns with the provider, and we were confident the appropriate action would be taken. This would contribute to children experiencing clean and safe environments.

Staff used a risk benefit approach with children and were vigilant and aware of when children required support during their play. For example, children were asked about height safety when climbing on large play apparatus. Staff sensitively reminded children to ensure bikes were kept on the concrete and asked why and if helmets should be worn. Children regularly risk assessed their play spaces and staff encouraged them to think how potential risks could be minimised. Involving children in accessing risk helped them learn how to keep themselves and others safe.

## 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.

The manager was enthusiastic and committed to improving outcomes for children and families. Their visible,

respectful, and supportive leadership resulted in a staff team who were confident in their roles and ensured children and their family's needs were at the centre of their work. The manager was well organised, demonstrated a clear vision for the service which contributed to the positive ethos of the setting.

The manager, also the headteacher of the school, ensured nursery children were meaningfully involved in school events, activities, and assemblies. Early Learning Fridays (ELF time) meant each Friday nursery and Primary one children came together to play and learn. 'Book buddies' came into the nursery to read stories and play with their younger peers. This holistic approach helped support nursery children's transitions into Primary one and enhanced their learning opportunities.

A realistic improvement plan with achievable targets supported most staff to have a good understanding of the vision of the service and their role in improving outcomes. Some self-evaluation and quality assurance had been undertaken which enabled the team to assess the impact of improvements from the previous year and measure success with ongoing targets. As the staff team was small the manager used an informal approach to monitoring staff practice and the sharing of feedback. Peer monitoring systems were in the early stages and staff needed time to embed this system, reflect if next steps had been actioned and then if improvements had been sustained. We encouraged the manager to continue to embed systems in practice to ensure their self-evaluation and quality assurance was robust, effective, and provided a steady pace of change. This will help sustain developments and support continuous improvement for children and families.

Children and families had some involvement in influencing positive change within the service. The manager told us gathering views and opinions of children and families had been identified as part of the service's ongoing improvement work. This will support the service to identify future priorities in collaboration with children and families and contribute to them being included in service developments.

## 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.

The small staff team were motivated, enthusiastic, and clear about their roles and responsibilities. They respected each other's strengths, morale was high, and they complemented each other well which resulted in a strong workforce. We saw they worked very well together and had established positive working relationships. An ethos of mutual trust and respect between them was evident. This provided a happy, caring, and safe environment for children and families. As a result, children felt loved and very well cared for.

Staff demonstrated they were well-trained and there was a good mix of skills and knowledge across the team. We saw they consistently and successfully empowered children to widen their skills by enabling them to think and problem solve independently. We found this approach was fully embedded into their practice. As a result, children were eager to learn and progressing well.

Staff deployed themselves effectively across play spaces which ensured there was a smooth pace to the children's day and experiences. Breaks were well planned for which allowed staff to eat and rest with minimised disruption to children's routines.

Newer staff to the service, were provided with a robust induction which supported their self-esteem and gave them confidence. They were complimentary of the manager and other staff members whom they

found approachable and supportive. This ensured they felt part of the existing team. Staff told us, 'The team are amazing, I just need to ask,' 'I feel like part of the family,' and 'Everyone is friendly and supportive, I love it here.'

## 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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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