

Liff Pre School Class Day Care of Children

Liff Primary School
Liff
Dundee
DD2 5NJ

Telephone: 01382 768 109

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
11 March 2025

Service provided by:
Angus Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000043

Service no:
CS2003016861

About the service

Liff Pre School Class provides a daycare of children service in Liff, Angus. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 14 children. The age range of the children will be from three years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is located within a small residential community in Liff and is close to local woodland areas. The nursery consists of a playroom which includes a kitchen and snack area. There is a secure outdoor play area for children to access.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 10 March 2025 between 08:30 and 14:45. Feedback was shared with the service on 11 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 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 using the service and five of their family members
- spoke with staff and the management team
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were at the heart of this service and staff knew them well, which ensured their needs could be fully met.
- Interactions between staff and children were nurturing, warm and caring.
- Children were having fun and were engaged in their play and learning.
- The service was currently further developing parental engagement and offered parents opportunities to be a part of the daily life of the service.
- A motivated and skilled staff team provided a broad range of play and learning experiences to support children to progress and achieve.

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

Interactions between staff and children were kind, caring and nurturing. Attachments had been formed between some children and specific staff members. Staff were down at child level during interactions, and they spoke to children about their home lives and families. Children were offered comfort and reassurance when upset and emotions were regularly discussed.

Comfortable and cosy spaces provided children with the opportunity to take part in a quieter activity or to rest and relax when they wished. Children were happy and confident and were at the heart of this service. One parent shared, 'Liff Nursery is warm, welcoming, nurturing and so excellently run. The staff go above and beyond all expectations I have as a parent, to ensure my child is treated as an individual, heard, respected and entirely comfortable in the wonderful environment created.'

Personal plans were in place for every child. My World documents were detailed, and children's preferences and wishes were clearly identified. This ensured children's needs could be fully met. These documents were reviewed at least every six months by parents to keep them current and up to date. A parent commented, 'We are given their folders home but also given access when we needed to. The plan is reviewed every few months, which keeps it updated.'

Mealtimes were valuable social experiences for children. Independence and life skills were promoted, for example, children used safety knives to slice fruit, they poured their own drinks and used tongs to serve their side dishes. Staff sat with children and took part in quality discussions with them and offered support when required. We discussed with the service that there were further opportunities for children to develop their independence and life skills during mealtime experiences. This had been identified by the service and is currently being developed.

Medication systems were in place and were well managed. Consent forms for administering medication were completed in full and reviewed regularly to keep children safe. Regular audits were completed in line with current guidance.

Children had been supported to develop an understanding of their rights which included high quality care. Rights based language was promoted throughout the service and the school and nursery were awarded the Rights Respecting Silver Award during the week of the inspection.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were having fun and were engaged in their play and learning. Children led their own play through a balance of high quality planned and spontaneous learning experiences. Staff had a good knowledge of children's interests which were supported and extended throughout their play. Skilled and effective questioning developed children's problem-solving skills and critical thinking. A parent commented, 'Lots of different activities and choices including exploring outdoors. There is structure and free play opportunities.'

A group of children named the 'Creative Caterpillars' which included children from the school took part in a skills squad session. The group had designed and created natural wind chimes to hang in the nursery and school gardens. They took part in a discussion to evaluate their skills and learning which children identified as 'collaboration, creativity and respect.' Children shared ideas for future skills groups. These valuable sessions had supported nursery children to develop confidence and creativity, and to work together with school aged children.

Language, literacy and numeracy were naturally incorporated into children's play. Books were available within most play areas including outdoors. This supported children to extend their play and develop imaginations through quality story sharing and role play. Numbers and letters were visible throughout the room on resources, wall displays, labels and recipes. Mathematical language which included 'more and less' were used at the playdough station and during loose parts play outdoors. Opportunities for mark making were supported and developed to support challenge and progression. The service was currently in the process of further developing numeracy and literacy outdoors.

The service had a clear passion for developing science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM) throughout children's play and learning. There had been a recent focus on engineering which had developed children's knowledge and enhanced their design and creativity skills through construction and block play. The development of digital technology has also been a focus within the service. Their work within STEAM had recently been recognised by the local authority and will be shared nationally with other services.

Children participated in group time after lunch where they chose to take part in some fun rhyming activities which had been an interest over several months. This was followed by a group discussion about food waste. They discussed how to recycle food waste and then children discussed waste food being fed to animals. This led to a discussion about wasting water and there being no water for animals to drink or plants to grow. This session resulted in quality discussions during which children shared thoughts, ideas and their current knowledge of food waste and how to manage this more appropriately.

Planning approaches were child centred and responsive to children's interests. Daily planning meetings took place which provided staff with the opportunity to discuss and evaluate children's play and learning. There was a balance of planned and spontaneous learning. Observations of children's play and learning were recorded in individual learning folios. Children were keen to look through their folios and discuss their previous learning experiences. Folders were shared with families and regular observations were shared on the Seesaw app. Future possibilities were recorded which identified the possible next steps in children's learning. We discussed with the service that an overview of these next steps for each child would make them more manageable and would further enhance learning and progression.

Floorbooks showcased children's play and learning through photographs and observations. The child's voice was evident throughout each book and mind maps were used to assess children's current knowledge within specific areas of their learning. This supported staff to extend and further develop children's learning and play experiences.

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

The setting was inviting and provided a welcoming and homely environment where children felt safe. Artwork and framed photographs of the children ensured they felt respected and valued. A wide range of toys and resources which were easily accessible, supported high quality play and learning and reflected children's curiosities and interests. Tables and chairs were child height which ensured children were comfortable during their experiences.

The outdoor play area was downstairs from the main playroom; however, children had free flow access and were supervised and monitored while using the stairs. A wide range of loose parts, construction resources, and active play equipment made the outdoor environment inviting for children to explore and develop their curiosities and imaginations. The outdoor area is currently being further developed.

The environment was well maintained and a buzzer system on the main door kept the playroom secure. The outdoor environment was enclosed by a high fence and low gates within the grounds of the school, which were kept bolted. Staff monitored and supervised children and maintained effective communications with each other to monitor movement between indoors and outdoors. The staff team had used SIMOA (safety, inspect, monitor, observe, act) practice notes to support ongoing reflection and evaluation to maintain safe environments and experiences for children.

Risk assessments were in place which ensured safe areas and environments were provided for children to play and learn. Children were involved in creating risk benefit assessments which prompted them to identify possible risks and how to keep themselves safe. There were discussions throughout play which encouraged children to think about how to stay safe during their play experiences.

Infection prevention and control measures were in place and were followed at all times. Hand washing was carried out at appropriate times throughout the day and children appeared to be aware that this was part of their daily routine. Surfaces were cleaned before and after mealtimes and toilet areas were well resourced with soap and paper towels. The playroom was well ventilated to minimise the risk of spread of infection.

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 values of the service were to be kind, respectful and responsible. These values were evident throughout the life of the service and children were heard to use these words during their play and learning. Children and families were involved in a consultation regarding the values of the service.

Parents were involved in the life of the service through stay and play sessions, nursery natters, review meetings and regular whole school events. Families were regularly asked for feedback after attending events and sessions in nursery. Parents also shared feedback through the Seesaw app, at review meetings and during verbal communications at drop off and pick up times. These opportunities ensured that parents were included and felt involved in ongoing developments within the service. One parent shared, 'We are asked lots for feedback and ideas and see these taken on board in terms of nursery activities.'

The service had an improvement plan in place which clearly identified improvement priorities. The plan was regularly evaluated to the impact on outcomes for children and any further next steps or actions. Staff were involved in taking forward these improvements within the nursery.

The service used a variety of self-evaluation tools to support ongoing reflection and improvement. These were all clearly identified in a detailed quality assurance calendar. Methods used included regular auditing and monitoring of practice, environments, experiences and children's plans. The service created action plans and evaluated their actions to identify the impact on children's experiences. Staff regularly reflected and took part in professional discussions to evaluate the service and improve outcomes for children.

Annual appraisal meetings took place which provided staff and management with the opportunity to discuss and recognise strengths and possibilities for professional development. There were also regular wellbeing check ins with staff throughout the year and staff were supported daily to maintain their wellbeing.

Newly recruited staff were supported through an induction process which incorporated the National Induction Resource. Staff spoke highly of the induction process and being supported by a mentor.

Staff had regular opportunities to take part in training which included all mandatory training. The staff team now completed a learning reflection after attending training. They identified their own learning and the impact it had on their practice and the experiences and outcomes for children.

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 nursery was well staffed throughout the day and ratios were maintained at all times. Staff knew the children well and had developed positive relationships with them and their families. There was a range of knowledge, skills and experience between staff members who were keen to share their strengths and skills with each other.

Children and families were welcomed on arrival to the nursery and children's transitions were positively supported between indoors and outdoors, down to the dinner hall and when spending time in the primary one class. A parent highlighted, 'The welcome is not pertinent to just morning drop off and afternoon pick up, which never deviates from anything but the utmost of warmth and comfort. You are always told if there is ever anything, just to approach the staff.' Children's needs were met throughout the day and staff worked well together to provide a wide range of quality learning experiences for children.

Staff absences were supported by staff members from other Angus council services. Relief members of staff were given a tour of the service and an overview of the day. They were supported throughout the day to meet children's needs. A relief member of staff fitted in well with the team during the inspection, interacted well with children and was supported by the staff team.

Staff were respectful of each other. They were flexible and proactive and worked well together as a team. They communicated well with each other, supported each other and interacted well with children. A passionate and motivated staff team provided quality and fun interactions which further supported outcomes and experiences for children. A parent shared, 'I am extremely happy about the service. The staff are dedicated to providing an environment which fulfils my child's needs. They are always smiling and happy to see my child. You get a warm feeling about the nursery from the minute you walk in.'

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

The service must ensure that effective measures are taken to ensure children's health and safety through a more robust and permanent solution to the barrier between the children's toilets and the playroom.

This is ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "my environment is secure and safe" (HSCS 5.17) and in order to comply with regulation 4 (1) (a) Welfare of users of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011.

Timescale: 1 May 2019.

This requirement was made on 5 November 2018.

Action taken on previous requirement

The toilets have been refurbished since the last inspection and there is now a door between the toilet area and the playroom.

Met - within timescales

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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