

Longside Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Longside Primary School
22 Inn Brae
Longside
Peterhead
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Telephone: 01779 403 700

Type of inspection:
Announced

Completed on:
5 March 2025

Service provided by:
Aberdeenshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000029

Service no:
CS2003015450

About the service

Longside Primary School Nursery is a day care of children service accommodated within Longside Primary School, Aberdeenshire. They are registered to provide care to a maximum of 28 children aged three years to those not yet attending primary school. At the time of inspection, 37 children were registered with the service.

Children are cared for in one playroom with a kitchen and integral toilets. There is direct access to an outdoor play area. The service is close to the village shop, park, and other amenities.

About the inspection

This pilot inspection was a shared visit between the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland HM inspectors to test the 'Quality improvement framework for early learning and childcare sectors'. The pilot took place on 3, 4, and 5 March 2025. The pilot was carried out by one Care Inspectorate inspector and one HM inspector.

To prepare for the inspection, the Care Inspectorate 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.

This inspection was part of a shared pilot. Because this inspection was part of a pilot, no new evaluations (grades) have been awarded.

During the inspection, the Care Inspectorate:

- spoke with children using the service and two of their friends and family members
- received 18 completed questionnaires/survey responses (all types)
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Education Scotland will provide a high level summary of the meetings and discussions held between the HM inspector, senior leaders, stakeholders, and practitioners in the setting. This will not include evaluations and will not be published.

Key messages

- Children were cared for by staff who were motivated and enthusiastic in their professional learning.
- Children were cared for by staff who worked well as a team.
- Children enjoyed playing outside and had fun playing games and exploring.
- The indoor play environment could be improved to make it more spacious, homely, and welcoming.

Leadership

Staff skills, knowledge, values, and deployment

Staff training and ongoing professional development was supported and encouraged by leaders within the setting. This led to motivated staff with high aspirations for children's experiences. Opportunities included training in using intensive interactions. This led to improved staff skills and confidence in supporting children's communication and understanding. Some staff discussed professional reading in areas such as the Froebel Principles and Hygge Principles. This resulted in some changes to the learning environment and in the introduction of more natural materials. Staff were aware of recent guidance such as the Care Inspectorate's 'Good practice guidance: prevention and management of choking episodes in babies and children' and the 'Quality improvement framework for early learning and childcare sectors'. This promoted positive outcomes and experiences for children. However, further use of guidance to promote an enabling learning environment would be beneficial.

Experienced and skilled staff demonstrated a good understanding of child protection, food hygiene, and first aid to help keep children safe. Handwashing was embedded in practice and staff followed effective infection prevention and control practice when serving meals and snacks. However, at times, some areas of the nursery, including children's toilets, were not always clean and tidy to help keep children safe and well.

Staff benefitted from support and supervision to celebrate success and learn from mistakes. Regular team meetings promoted opportunities for staff to share information, reflect on their practice, and learn from others.

Staff were registered with a professional body and followed the codes of practice. This led to positive outcomes for children and families.

Children were cared for mainly by a consistent staff team. Staff enjoyed working together and felt that they complimented each other's strengths. Staff absences were covered by relief staff who knew the children well. This led to consistent care and promoted positive relationships. Parents commented, "I have a very positive relationship with nursery staff" and "They are all very helpful and friendly".

Staff worked well together and were clear on their roles and responsibilities. They recognised gaps in interactions with children and were proactive in asking their colleagues for help. This contributed to quality engagement when supporting children in their learning. There were enough staff, however staff breaks could have been better planned to minimise disruption to children's experience. For example, towards the end of lunch there were not enough staff to remain seated at the tables with children and to supervise those who had left. This meant one child had to move seats whilst they were still eating.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces

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Children were cared for in one main playroom. The building was well maintained and looked attractive. A well positioned parents' room and spacious foyer promoted opportunities for sharing information and confidential discussions.

The playroom was well proportioned and supported children's independence in making choices. As a result, most children were engrossed in their play and were progressing well. Some areas, such as the role play corner, looked attractive with a range of real-life resources familiar to the children. However, overall, the environment was cluttered, busy, and overwhelming. This restricted opportunities for children to move safely between play spaces and limited opportunities for staff to provide effective support and supervision.

Children benefitted from free-flow indoor/outdoor play for most of the day. Resources and equipment supported their play and learning and included a well resourced mud kitchen, sandpit, and climbing areas. Children enjoyed playing outside and had fun running around, playing games, and exploring. Children had been planting and growing bulbs, helping to develop their understanding of the natural world around them. Parents commented, "Having unrestricted access to the outdoor play area is possibly one of my child's most favourite things to do at nursery" and "My child has been outdoors lot and the equipment outdoors is great. It's always changing and improving. My child loves it outside".

Some measures were in place to minimise risks to children when playing. The Care Inspectorate campaign SIMOA (safety, inspect, monitor, observe, act) was used to help children make decisions and understand the impact and consequences of risky and unsafe behaviour. This contributed to children's participation in challenging and fun experiences. Effective procedures were followed to limit the potential risk of children exiting the setting unaccompanied. However, the play environment was not always tidy, raising the potential risk of slipping, tripping, and falling.

Resources, toys, and games were adaptive and responsive to children's differing emotions and interests and promoted children's learning in numeracy and literacy. Children were able to access a wide range of reading materials and enjoyed an altogether story time. There were resources for mark making and writing, including clip boards with pens. Planned learning experiences supported children learning about shapes and this was enhanced though the various games and resources available.

Children had some opportunities to influence the design and use of the spaces. For example, children were consulted and asked for suggestions when developing the outdoor learning environment. This led to children who played in spaces they enjoyed.

Ways to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion were reflected in some resources and spaces available. This led to children who were kind and respectful in their understanding of difference. However, this could be further enhanced with more resources to further develop an understanding of different cultures.

Children's information was stored safely in line with general data protection requirements. Leaders and staff were well informed about their responsibilities and followed the setting's policies and procedures.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

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