

# Abbey Nursery Houston Day Care of Children

South Street  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
21 February 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Children's Hour Limited

**Service provider number:**  
SP2009010598

**Service no:**  
CS2009232874

## About the service

Abbey Nursery Houston is provided by Children's Hour Limited. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 92 children, 24 from birth to under 2 years, 20 children aged 2 to under 3 years and 48 children aged 3 to 5 years.

The service is situated in Houston with the boundaries of Renfrewshire Council, and the local authority commissions early learning and childcare places for children aged three to primary school age. It is based within its own accommodation comprising of three large playrooms, an outdoor play area, toilets and changing facilities. An onsite kitchen provides meals for children.

The setting is based in the heart of the community and is accessible by car and foot. There is a play park for children directly opposite the setting and the adjacent local Scout Hall is used to provide additional play opportunities.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Thursday 20 February 2025 from 08:30 - 17:00 and Friday 21 February 2025 from 08:30 - 16:00. 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, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with 12 children using the service and 11 of their families
- spoke with 14 staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children experienced warm, consistent and responsive care. Staff were reassuring, comforting and gentle in their interactions with children. Staff knew children very well and were committed to maintaining positive relationships and effective communication with children and their families. Families felt valued and involved in the setting.
- The management team had a clear, shared vision for the service and were committed to continuous improvement. We could see that improvements were prioritised to improve outcomes for children and families.
- The management team should now work together to make the necessary improvements to the building.

## 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.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, consistent and responsive care that fostered their wellbeing. They were sensitively cared for and helped to express their needs. Staff were reassuring, comforting and gentle in their interactions with children.

Each child had a personal plan developed in partnership with families. These plans contained comprehensive information on each child's holistic needs and allowed staff to tailor care to promote their wellbeing and meet their individual needs. Plans were reviewed regularly, but this needed to be done at least once in every six months to ensure staff always had current information on children's needs and routines to deliver the right care at the right time. Families told us:

"The plans are very in-depth and reviewed regularly. The manager always reminds parents that they can ask for their child's plan to be updated at anytime, we don't have to wait for the standardised review periods if there is something we'd like to add/take away."

"[We] meet with child's key worker to review progress and areas for development. They are available if we have any queries or concerns outside of this formal meeting."

"We feel there is a lot of time given to meeting to discuss our children's needs and develop their plans."

"My child's personal plan is regularly reviewed and I will often be asked to read and sign this personal plan to ensure all details are still correct. If I have ever passed on any information the staff seem prompt in updating the personal plan and communicating this with the other staff."

The manager had developed strong relationships with external agencies to ensure the setting worked collaboratively to support all children to reach their potential, particularly where additional support needs were identified.

Children had access to healthy meals and snacks to sustain them throughout the day. Overall, snack and lunch routines were calm and pleasant offering children some opportunities to develop independence skills. However, moving forward we suggested that the manager reviewed these arrangements to make them more homely in keeping with the ethos of the setting. For example, staff positioning themselves at the table more consistently would have promoted positive social interaction, ensured more effective supervision and offered opportunities for role modelling.

While a water station was available for children aged over three years, more could have been done to ensure younger children remained hydrated. Staff had identified this as an area for development. We advised that one family felt that their children could have been better hydrated and commented: "The children are offered a well balanced lunch but I'd like to see or hear of snacks improving. I often see rice crackers on the daily snack updates and have seen my child be given dry oat cakes or breadsticks near home time. I want them to be offered different types of fruit and healthy, nutritional home baking. Also more water or milk offered throughout the day. Both our children down a bottle of juice or water as soon as in the car after pick up."

Overall, children had good opportunities for rest and sleep to support their emotional wellbeing throughout the day. At times, some staff needed to be more mindful of the impact of others playing near sleeping children to ensure sleep time was calm and restful.

Effective arrangements were in place to ensure the safe storage and administration of medication to meet children's health needs. Clear plans and procedures were in place for those children with health issues, allergies, food intolerances and preferences. The management team were working closely with staff to ensure consistent compliance with these procedures.

Staff were confident and well-trained to understand their responsibilities for safeguarding children.

### 1.3 Play and learning

Children were happy and confident across the setting. They were engaged in a range of meaningful activities indoors and outdoors. Older children talked to us about their favourite toys and games and showed us their artwork. Overall, families were happy with their children's opportunities for play and learning and commented: "My child loves sensory play, music, stories and outdoor play and particularly enjoys physical experiences where they are developing their gross motor skills" and "Our child enjoys all forms of energetic play and this need for exercise seems to be met as they take part in outdoor play, visits to the local scout hall for football sessions or PE sessions. My child takes part in a lot of song/dance/movement within the playroom through yoga/music and movement - and enjoys showing us the moves at home too!"

Floor books highlighted the variety of play and learning experiences available to children. Literacy and numeracy were well-supported across the setting with staff confidently leading activities to promote children's language and communication skills. Children used counting skills and were developing an understanding of mathematical language. Opportunities for children to develop fine and gross motor skills were plentiful, with a local Scout Hall being used well to supplement this programme.

Staff understanding of child development, theory and practice was good, but some staff would have benefited from additional opportunities to learn more about recognising and supporting children with schematic play. During our visit, there was a balance of adult and child initiated experiences with children gravitating more towards adult led play. Stronger use of provocations to support curiosity, creativity and imagination would have increased opportunities for children to lead their own play and learning and allowed staff to enhance their responsiveness to children's ideas and interests.

The approach to planning for learning had recently been revised and staff were building confidence with using the new approach. Children's learning journals were used very effectively to capture meaningful observations of children's learning and development and to highlight the individual progress they were making. Families enjoyed reading these learning journals on the Family App, but some told us they wished there was more regular communication about what their children were doing. "I'm sure the children do lots of fun activities, but they aren't always communicated. Every day at pick up we are told they had a great day and see drawings but always scribbles on a page. I'd like to see more painting, craft making and sports. I see little of that", "More updates on the app would be beneficial even just a sentence at the end of the day or photos uploaded throughout the day" and "Communication on what the children do each day, more outdoor play that extends the immediate nursery grounds i.e. visiting local parks, farms etc."

Some of the younger children could choose when they went outdoors, with free flow access to the garden area having been introduced. The facilities for older children made it more complicated to organise free flow access to outdoors, which resulted in children taking turns to go out in groups throughout the day. This did not meet the needs of all children. We observed children asking to go outdoors but being unable to go as there were no spaces. A parent also commented on this and told us: "Not sure how much my child gets outdoors, when I ask my child if they have been outside they often reply with no, their group didn't get to do it." We discussed the arrangements with the management team and it was agreed that more could be done to enable children to free flow outdoors.

When children were able to go outdoors, we could see that they enjoyed their time outdoors and were building confidence in dressing themselves in their outdoor clothes and shoes independently. Families enjoyed the time children had to spend outdoors within the community and within the setting.

## 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.

Overall, the setting was comfortable, furnished to a good standard and welcoming with plenty of natural light and ventilation. A secure door entry system limited access to and from the buildings which helped keep children safe.

Some areas would have benefited from redecoration, particularly where there had been water ingress on the ceiling. The babies' changing area needed to be heated more adequately and a small area needed to be checked for dampness. The kitchen area within the 3-5 playroom was worn and some laminated surfaces could no longer be cleaned effectively due to the porous nature of the exposed materials (see area for improvement 1).

Staff aimed to provide a home from home environment to children and families, but there was scope to make the playrooms more homely. For example, the addition of softer lighting, plants and attractive wall displays. Softer and more homely playrooms would have enhanced the nurturing environment to promote a positive sense of wellbeing. The Care Inspectorate document Space to Grow and Thrive contains some good practice examples of homely environments for reference, if required: <https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/5784/space-to-grow-and-thrive.pdf>

Families told us that they were warmly welcomed into the nursery setting and commented: "Love the location - lots of nature surrounding it and local park" and "It is clear that the staff work incredibly hard to create a welcoming environment which allows the children to feel safe, cared for and valued."

Across the setting children had sufficient space to learn and develop through play. A lovely quiet area had been established within the 3-5 playroom to allow children to regulate and play quietly, alone and/or in smaller groups.

Staff were in the process of improving the layout of playrooms, developing more defined and better resourced play areas to enhance outcomes for children. The management team needed to continue to support staff to enhance the layout of the environment and presentation of resources to support children to make choices, self-select and lead their own play and learning. The addition of more natural resources would lead to more open-ended play, provide more opportunities for children to explore and engage in creative loose parts play and enhance vocabulary skills.

Children were learning about taking care of their play resources and were encouraged to tidy and respect the toys they used.

There was a varied selection of play resources which were well-maintained. Overall, resources were displayed at child height to encourage choice and self-section. However, resources for the youngest children were kept in baskets that were too large for the children to see inside and self-select. The younger children would have benefited from greater access to natural and malleable materials.

While children were able to explore their environments both indoors and outdoors in the knowledge that some risk assessments were in place and staff understood how to keep them safe, risk assessments needed to be reviewed to highlight the hazards and mitigations identified in each individual playroom.

Overall, there were effective procedures in place to control and prevent the spread of infection within the service to protect staff and children. Children and staff demonstrated good hand washing practices and children were learning how this helped to protect them from germs.

Children's information was stored securely in line with data protection requirements.

## Areas for improvement

1. To ensure children can access a well-maintained environment, the service provider should develop an action plan with timescales to address:

- a) areas requiring redecoration
- b) any sign of dampness and the provision of heating within the baby changing area
- c) the repair/replacement of the kitchen area within the 3-5 playroom.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment" (HSCS 5.24).

## 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.

The management team had changed since the last inspection and this had resulted in a positive impact on quality within the setting. The management team had a clear, shared vision for the service and were committed to continuous improvement. We were able to see that a methodical approach had been taken to identifying and driving improvements forward under the clear direction of the service manager, over the past year, resulting in improved outcomes for children and families.

An improvement plan was in place which highlighted clear and realistic priorities and timescales to make improvements and take these forward. The service vision, values and aims were made available to families, and the service provider had recently undertaken a programme of rebranding to reflect the strong commitment to attachment led practice.

Staff, children and their families had an increasing role in quality assurance. Staff were becoming more involved in self-evaluation at a pace designed to build their confidence in understanding their roles in, and influence on, assessing quality across the setting. Families felt their views were welcomed within the service and commented: "We get asked for feedback and can give opinions at parents' night", "The setting have asked for feedback and feel can be open and honest", "Regular feedback welcomed", "Parents are regularly informed of potential changes at the nursery and asked for feedback e.g. a change to the menu", "Provide feedback directly to nursery", "Regular consultation via the app about planned changes and developments" and "The nursery will send out questionnaires asking for parental feedback."

The new management team had more clearly defined leadership roles and areas of responsibility, which had resulted in more effective monitoring of quality within the setting. The manager was clear about areas highlighted for improvement and plans to address these. Staff were encouraged take a more active role in monitoring and evaluating their practice and assessing outcomes for children and families.

Staff met regularly to discuss the service and highlight where improvements were needed. Staff told us they felt valued, well-supported and could make suggestions for improvement.

Appropriate arrangements were in place to record details of any accidents and incidents occurring and to pass this information on to families. Some staff were trained in first aid to ensure they had the skills and confidence to react to any accidents or health issues arising. Accident and incident reports were audited monthly to ensure patterns and hazards could be identified and addressed promptly.

Staff had been recruited safely and all staff were registered to practice with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). Staff had undertaken qualifications relevant to their roles and others were undertaking apprenticeships. Staff told us they had good opportunities to engage in continuous professional learning to ensure their practice was underpinned by relevant theory and guidance.



## 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.

The management team recognised the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed during the day as essential to the wellbeing of children in the service. We confirmed that the service was working within the prescribed adult to child ratios. We were able to see that staff were able to direct their interactions and attention equally to children.

Staff shifts and working patterns were arranged to ensure continuity of care across the day, supporting children's emotional wellbeing. Keyworking arrangements were in place to promote consistency, positive transitions for children and good communication with families. Staff managed transitions well across the day in a way that allowed children to feel secure and prepared for what was happening now and next. Good communication mechanisms ensured families were kept informed about staffing, ensuring that families were prepared when keyworkers were on leave or left the service. Staff knew children in their care very well and spoke confidently about children's individual care needs. One family member commented: "Key worker is approachable and regularly shares updates about my child and their development needs. Additional staff in the room are also aware of parents and provide daily verbal reports about child's day."

Families valued the positive relationships they had with the staff team. They told us they valued the positive communication channels within the setting and commented:

"The staff has a fantastic understanding of our child and are able to use my child's interests in learning. As a family we love that the nursery has good parent/family engagement keeping in regular contact through the Family app allowing us to keep fully up-to-date and connected to our child's day-to-day life at nursery. This allows us to reach out and communicate with staff at ease also."

"I feel like I can have open and honest conversations with all the staff, I know them all by name (even the management team who aren't routinely in the rooms), and I feel confident that they are fully invested in the wellbeing of my child."

"Staff are very welcoming and display a good understanding of my child's needs. Staff will always ask how my child has been in the mornings to allow for any information to be passed over. Upon pick up a staff member will always give us a brief rundown of my child's day and making prompts to allow my child to tell us on the way home in more detail. Staff take the time to get to know us as a family and often ask about holidays, pets, events etc which makes a huge difference and really helps develop the relationships with those who are caring for your child."

Staff worked well together as a team and told us they valued the support they received from their colleagues and manager.

Overall, adult to child interactions were very positive. Staff and children had developed good relationships and had fun together. Staff listened attentively to children and were interested in what they had to say. They were encouraging and keen to celebrate children's achievements and progress.

## 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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