

Ness Castle Nursery Day Care of Children

Ness Castle Primary School
Brodie Road
INVERNESS
IV2 6FW

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
11 March 2025

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2022000241

About the service

Ness Castle Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 110 children at any one time, from the age of three years up to children attending primary school. The Service is operated by The Highland Council. The head teacher is the registered manager and the service operates term time only.

The service is located within Ness Castle Primary School in Inverness. It has its own separate entrance. The nursery premises consists of a large open plan playroom and there is a separate area for school aged children. There is an enclosed outdoor play area which extends children's play and learning experiences.

The service is situated in a residential area near a supermarket and other local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced follow up inspection which took place on 10 and 11 March 2025. 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 children using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Effective personal planning for children was not consistent within the service.
- Positive changes had been made to improve snack and mealtime experiences.
- Effective measures were now in place to identify and reduce risks within the setting.
- Staff had accessed some training in relation to quality interactions. However, the impact of this was not yet evident across the whole staff team.
- Staff were beginning to introduce new resources to the environment. However, further work is needed to promote children's continued learning, development and enjoyment in literacy and numeracy.
- Staff deployment still did not consistently meet children's needs.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 24 February 2025, the provider must ensure each child receives appropriate care and support, and their needs are met.

To do this the provider must at a minimum ensure:

- Personal plans set out children's current needs and how they will be met.
- All staff are knowledgeable and understand the information within the personal plans and use this to effectively meet each child's needs.
- Personal plans are regularly reviewed and updated in partnership with parents to reflect children's current needs.

This is to comply with Regulation 5(1)(2) – (Personal plans) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Care Inspectorate document 'Guide for providers on personal planning'.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices' (HSCS 1.15).

This requirement was made on 21 January 2025.

Action taken on previous requirement

Effective personal planning for children was not consistent within the service. Training in developing and maintaining personal plans had been carried out for all staff. Some personal plans sampled set out children's current needs and how they would be met. However, this was not yet routine practice for all children.

Children with identified needs had 'pupil passports' which contained information about how to support children to meet their individual needs. For some children there was insufficient detail to help staff provide specific support for individuals. For example, details of support strategies were not always clear for staff, or relief staff, to ensure consistency of support for individual children. This had the potential to impact on positive outcomes. The manager and staff should now review pupil passports to ensure specific support details are included and in place for children who would benefit from additional support.

Some families had been given the opportunity to review and update personal planning information. This was not yet consistent for all children and some children's information had not been updated to reflect children's current needs. As a result, staff did not always have the information necessary to support individuals.

The service now needs to continue to develop personal planning to ensure that children's information is recorded consistently. Information in personal plans must be used effectively by staff to meet children's current needs, using identified strategies.

This requirement has not been fully met and has been extended to 16 May 2025.

Not met

Requirement 2

By 6 January 2025, the provider must review and improve the mealtime and snack experiences to ensure children's safety, health and wellbeing.

This should include but is not limited to, ensuring:

- a) Staff are deployed effectively to ensure children are safe and well supported during snack and mealtimes.
- b) Staff are competent, skilled and knowledgeable in relation to 'Good practice guidance: prevention and management of choking episodes in babies and children'.
- c) Staff apply their learning into practice.

This is in order to comply with the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/210) 4(1)(a) - Requirements to make proper provision for the health and welfare of service users.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible' (HSCS 1.35).

This requirement was made on 6 December 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

Positive changes had been made to improve snack and mealtime experiences. Staff deployment had been reviewed at snack and mealtimes to ensure children's safety. Staff sat at tables with children. This ensured effective supervision and enabled staff to provide individualised care and support.

Staff had familiarised themselves with good practice guidance: 'prevention and management of choking episodes in babies and children'. This meant they were skilled and knowledgeable to respond immediately in the event of an emergency such as, choking.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 3

By 6 January 2025, the provider must ensure that children experience care in an appropriate and safe environment.

At a minimum, the provider must ensure that:

- a) Effective measures are in place to identify and reduce the risks within the service.
- b) Staff are confident and competent in identifying and removing risks to children within the setting, both indoors and outdoors.

This is 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 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I make informed choices and decisions about the risks I take in my daily life and am encouraged to take positive risks which enhance the quality of my life' (HSCS 2.24); and

'My environment is secure and safe' (HSCS 5.19).

This requirement was made on 6 December 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

Effective measures were now in place to identify and reduce risks within the setting. Staff were confident and competent in removing risks to children within the setting. This meant children were able to play and learn in a safe environment.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 4

By 24 February 2025, the provider must ensure that children are effectively supported and supervised in order to keep them safe.

To do this the provider must at a minimum:

- a) ensure staffing is well planned to keep children safe and their needs are met
- b) ensure staff communicate and work together effectively
- c) monitor staff practice and deployment, and where necessary, make improvements
- d) effective systems are implemented to ensure children are always accounted for.

This is in order to comply with section 7(1)(a) of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I am confident that people respond promptly, including when I ask for help' (HSCS 3.17); and

'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15).

This requirement was made on 6 December 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

Effective monitoring of staff deployment had not yet been implemented to ensure high quality outcomes for all children.

The service was staffed above the minimum adult to child ratio required. However, staffing was not well planned to keep children safe at all times and to meet the individual needs of children. The approach was not outcome focussed and did not take into account, the complexity of individual children's needs and the layout of the building.

On occasions staff were task orientated and not always aware of their positioning in relation to supporting interactions, experiences and outcomes. This was particularly noticeable during busier times of the day and throughout daily transitions. As a result, the quality of children's experiences were compromised.

Staff did not always pick up on children's cues for support and interaction. This meant children's needs were not met at the right time and on occasions children's wishes and choices were not always acknowledged. We also saw missed opportunities for extending play and learning to support children's curiosity and enquiry. Additionally, we identified gaps in staff communication across the day, resulting in poorer overall outcomes.

This requirement has not been fully met and has been extended to 16 May 2025.

Not met

Requirement 5

By 4 April 2025, the provider must ensure improved outcomes for children by implementing effective systems of quality assurance.

To do this the provider must at a minimum, ensure:

- a) the manager effectively monitors the work of each member of staff and the service as a whole
- b) clear and effective plans are in place for maintaining and improving the service
- c) effective audits of accident and incidents, and medication, are in place.

This is to comply with Regulation 3 Principles and Regulation 15 (a) and (b) Staffing of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This requirement was made on 6 December 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

The timescale for meeting this requirement has not yet expired. Therefore, this will be assessed at the next full inspection.

Not assessed at this inspection

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

To effectively deliver high quality play and learning experiences, the manager should support staff to access training appropriate to their role and apply the training to their practice.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) supporting and extending children's learning through high quality interactions and effective questioning
- b) using best practice guidance to support high quality play experiences
- c) using children's interests to plan experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 6 December 2024.

Action taken since then

Staff had accessed some training in relation to quality interactions. However, the impact of this was not yet evident across the whole staff team. There were a few examples of staff using open ended questioning to support children's thinking. However, on occasions there was missed opportunities to extend children's learning and widen their skills through play. This meant that staff were not effectively responding to children's interests and needs.

The service should continue to monitor staff practice, to ensure interactions are always of a high quality and that all staff have the skills and knowledge to deliver high quality play and learning experiences.

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

Previous area for improvement 2

To promote children's continued learning, development and enjoyment, children should have access to a wide range of literacy and numeracy resources and experiences, which are challenging and suitable to their individual interests and stages of development. There should be a sufficient number of resources to enable children to make independent choices and engage in deep and meaningful play.

This is to ensure that 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 6 December 2024.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection there were some improvements to the resources on offer. Staff were in the very early stages of using provocations and invitations to play, stimulating children's thinking and curiosity. This was most evident in the home corner, where literacy was promoted through real life resources such as, recipe books. Some areas of provision still lacked suitable resources to support and sufficiently challenge children's stage of development. The service should continue to develop the resources on offer to promote children's continued learning, development and enjoyment in literacy and numeracy.

This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

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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