

# Kingsford School Nursery Day Care of Children

Kingsford School  
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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
16 April 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Aberdeen City Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000349

**Service no:**  
CS2003014455

## About the service

Kingsford School Nursery is a day care of children service situated in the residential area of Sheddocksley in Aberdeen, close to local shops and community services. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 64 children aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school at any one time.

Kingsford School Nursery operates within purpose-built premises within the primary school grounds. The premises consist of an entrance area and a large open-plan playroom which can be divided into two classes. Each side has toilets for children, nappy changing areas and kitchen facilities. An office area and family room provide private spaces for meetings, group events and quiet spaces for individual children. The service has free flow access from the playrooms to an enclosed outdoor area.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 15 April 2025 between the hours of 08:30 and 17:50 and on the 16 April 2025 between the hours of 08:30 and 12:30. 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 during their play.
- Spoke with parents as they dropped off their children.
- Received eight parent/carer online questionnaires.
- Spoke with staff and management.
- Observed practice.
- Reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Staff were kind, caring and nurturing in their approach with children.
- Staff knew the children well and supported their individual needs.
- Staff had developed good relationships with parents who felt well informed and involved in their child's experiences and learning.
- Staff were passionate about their role and were keen to extend their professional development to further improve outcomes for children.
- The setting should use their success criteria to evaluate improvements and consider the impact of these on outcomes for children and families. Parents and children would benefit from improvements being shared to support their understanding of developments.
- Management should review staff deployment at lunchtime and ensure staff have a clear understanding of their roles to support the safety and wellbeing of children.

## 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.

### Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff were warm, gentle and caring in their approach. They were in tune with children and their needs, picking up on their cues and responding to children's requests. Reassurance and comfort was given when needed, contributing to positive attachments being formed. When speaking to staff it was clear that they knew the children well, and were able to discuss likes/dislikes, personalities, sensitivities and how they were supporting them. Parents told us they had good a relationship with staff caring for their children. One parent said; "Staff members are professional and welcoming. They inform me about any problems encountered." Another parent said; "The staff are very friendly and keep you updated with everything happening in nursery and letting you know how my [child] is getting on." This allowed care, support and experiences to be tailored to children's individual needs which supported them to feel safe and secure.

Children's wellbeing and progress was well supported through effective personal planning. Personal planning documents were individualised for each child and the wellbeing indicators captured individualised information and supported the children's progression. This ensured a holistic approach to care and allowed staff to effectively track progress in health and wellbeing. Since our last inspection, more detailed support plans were in place for children who required them. This ensured that all staff were clear on any sensitivities and how these were being supported. We discussed ensuring that staff have access to detailed strategies in place for children and were clear on how these were being used. This contributed to ensuring positive outcomes for children.

Children benefited from the system of rolling snacks which did not interrupt their play. Lunchtime took place together in both rooms. Children sat and chatted with friends while being able to eat at their own pace. Consideration had been given to supporting independence and we saw children serve some of their own food and drinks and scrape their plates after lunch before putting them in the dishwasher. Children ate food that was well presented, nutritious and took into account their preferences and dietary needs. At the time of our inspection, we saw some adults being more task focussed rather than sitting and engaging with children. This resulted in some children not being effectively supported and supervised. This meant that some children didn't experience a relaxed and social mealtime. Some children had to queue for a length of time for their lunch, resulting in them becoming restless. We raised this observation with management and advised them to review staff deployment and ensure they have a clear understanding of their role during snack and mealtimes.

The setting's policy detailed how they would safely manage the administration of medication. Medication was stored safely in accordance with current best practice. Since our last inspection, audits had been implemented which ensured that medication forms were completed in full and were being reviewed regularly, signed and dated along with parents. This ensured all relevant information was available to staff, contributing to the children's health and wellbeing.

We saw that no children slept as part of their daily routine at the time of our inspection. However, children's health and wellbeing had been considered by the availability of quiet, homely, comfortable spaces for the children to relax and rest if they needed to.

We did not observe a nappy change. There was however an appropriate policy was in place for staff to refer to. We saw staff approach children respectfully and the experience appeared to be a relaxed, nurturing experience for the children, with appropriate use of PPE (personal protective equipment) and appropriate changing facilities being used. This contributed to children's health and wellbeing.

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were happy and engaged in play throughout their day. A good range of age-appropriate resources, including loose parts and open-ended resources were on offer, in both indoor and outdoor environments. We saw children engage in imaginative play as they dressed up using the range of outfits, materials, bags and purses on offer to them. They spent time enjoying this experience dressing up an adult too making them a 'princess'. Children problem solved and investigated as they used test tubes in the water tray outdoors to make 'love potions.' They told me they were doing 'science' as they filled the test tubes with water, pom poms and chalk, stirring and shaking them. This promoted children's curiosity and encouraged them to be creative, problem solve together and use their imagination.

Staff extended children's learning using open questions and directing children to resources. A group of children played games with a skipping rope outdoors. The adult extended this game with the children asking questions such as 'what could we do next?' 'what do you think about?' and 'How could we make it harder?' Children then used the skipping rope in several ways, crawling under it, jumping over it and wiggling it to make it harder. Following the interest with the test tubes on day one, this was extended on day two by staff providing new resources for children, giving them the opportunity to experiment further. This highlighted that staff were genuinely interested and in tune with children's interests and perspectives, taking time to broaden children's thinking processes, play and learning.

A child-led approach to learning had been considered and implemented. Children were seen to be independent and could choose where and what they played with. We could see shelves and baskets available with resources to choose from. Children accessed these well, knew where to find them and moved them to support their play and learning. This supported the children's interests and experiences.

Language, literacy and numeracy experiences were good and woven throughout the provision. Resources included environmental print on packaging, calendar on the wall and magazines in the house corner, some pictorial signs for routines and some old real resources such as phones and keyboards. We saw staff encouraging mathematical language and supporting language development throughout the inspection. For example, whilst playing with the skipping rope positional language such as under and over was being reinforced. Staff spontaneously read stories to children during play and in groups. We discussed ensuring that there was a variety of books, mark making materials and print at the children's level available throughout the nursery environment, both indoors and outside at all times. This would further support the children's early language, literacy and numeracy development.

Staff explained their approach to planning and we could see that responsive and intentional planning had been taken into account. The format had recently changed to make the process more manageable for staff and ensure opportunities were not being missed. A gap, strength analysis approach was being used to monitor children's progress and support development. This allowed staff to identify gaps and target challenge and support for individual children. We discussed using floor books to capture children's voice and offer them ownership of their learning. These would also allow children to look back and reflect on their experiences which would support them to build on valuable life skills.

Seesaw was used to capture learning through sharing snap shots of learning, photos, observations and the child's focus week. This provided an opportunity for families to get an insight into their child's play and learning and allowed them to share home learning and experiences with the setting. Observations we sampled identified learning and were significant to individual children which allowed staff to track their progress and achievements. Staff were being supported to identify and plan meaningful next steps for children to ensure they were progressing well and were happy and confident.

Children had benefited from some connections within the school and the wider community since our last inspection. Parents who worked locally and local businesses had sourced materials to support the development of the outdoors. There were plans to take this further, inviting construction workers into the nursery to work with the children using materials and tools. This would contribute to children having new opportunities to learn about different jobs in the community and develop skills 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.

### Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The environment was well maintained and secure with plenty of natural light and ventilation. Resources such as soft furnishing, materials, greenery and lighting had been added to soften the atmosphere within the rooms. These all helped create a very welcoming feel to the service. Children were observed to move around the spaces with confidence and had the opportunity to play indoors or outside most of the time. This supported children's choice about where they played.

Indoor spaces were set up thoughtfully using furniture to create areas for the children to explore. A good variety of resources to support different play experiences were accessible to the children in both rooms. These included creative, messy play, construction, loose parts, house corner and quieter, cosier areas. We discussed the importance of ensuring areas were well stocked, particularly mark making and creative areas to ensure children have access to the variety of resources at all times. This would contribute to developing children's curiosities, literacy and creative skills.

Outdoors, the children had access to a large space including a sheltered area with a sound wall and water tray. In addition, an expanse of grass on a hill with a climbing frame and digging area and a concrete space with lots of loose parts. There were planters for planting and a mud kitchen. Children spent time running and being active, using the loose parts to create an obstacle course to balance on. They also enjoyed playing on the climbing frame and slide and digging in the planters. This supported the children to be active and build confidence and resilience.

Effective infection control measures ensured a clean and safe environment for children. We observed good hand washing being carried out by both staff and children at appropriate times. PPE was worn when required in line with best practice guidance, for example: during personal care and food preparation. This contributed to children being kept safe and well.

Systems were in place to help keep children safe. Risk assessments helped staff to mitigate risk and enhance children's safety. Since our last inspection, consideration had now been given to benefits alongside risks to support risky play and resilience.

Children were being involved in developing their skills and awareness of staying safe through discussions with staff. We suggested introducing the Care Inspectorate's 'SIMOA' campaign which would support a culture of talking about keeping themselves safe and understanding about risk. Accidents and incidents were documented well, and information was shared with parents. These were then audited and action taken if necessary. This contributed to the safety and wellbeing of staff and children.

## 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: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The nursery's vision, values and aims had been developed to include the views and ideas of staff, children and parents. This promoted a shared vision and values for the service, capturing what was important to all using the service and working there.

Children and families' views were valued and the setting had been working hard to gather these to support improvement. Examples included, parents being welcomed into the setting, information in the cloakroom, PEEP (Peers Early Education Partnership) learning together sessions being offered and the 'Seesaw' App was used to communicate with families. We saw that the setting had tried to consult with families through online questionnaires which had not been successful. The nursery found that talking to parents face to face was most effective. For example, asking the parents what they would like to explore at the next PEEP session and acting on this. We discussed ways of recording what parents had said and how the setting could highlight to parents that their views had been taken into consideration and any developments as a result. The majority of parents told us they were involved in a meaningful way to develop the setting. This ensured families were valued partners in ongoing improvements within the nursery.

Staff expressed that they felt well supported in their role, however, would welcome protected time for regular staff meetings to share their thoughts and reflect together. This would ensure there was time for staff to feel listened to and be meaningfully involved in developments. Monitoring of practice and support and supervision meetings were in place which supported staff. We saw that this allowed staff to be involved in self-evaluation which enabled them to identify strengths and consider what could be improved to support improvement within the service. The setting had identified that more regular staff monitoring and staff meetings would support staff to reflect deeper on their practice to bring about improved outcomes for children and families.

The setting had documented their improvement using an eBook with the support of their locality lead. Engaging with recognised audit tools, such as the quality framework, had allowed them to recognise what they were doing well and identify areas for improvement. An action plan was used to support improvement and document developments. The setting still needs to use success criteria to evaluate their improvements and consider whether there was a need for further development or if the outcome had influenced further improvements. Sharing this with families and children would support everyone to be clear about the setting's focus for improvement. (See area for improvement 1)

The setting had developed their quality assurance calendar since our last inspection to support procedures, audits and monitoring within the nursery. These were being evaluated and the outcome shared with staff to ensure everyone was clear and aware of the impact.

## Areas for improvement

1. 1. To support positive and improved outcomes for children and families, the manager should ensure effective quality assurance systems are fully embedded into practice. This should include but not be limited to:

a) Regular staff meetings.

b) Regular monitoring of staff practice and environment.

c) Evidencing and evaluating against success criteria within improvement plans and sharing this with families.

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).

## 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.

### Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff were warm and responsive in their approach. They joined in children's play and followed their interests. All staff knew the individual needs and interests of the children which allowed them to offer individualised support and care. We found the staff team to be enthusiastic and motivated and our discussions highlighted that they were passionate about their role.

Children appeared happy and engaged in their play supported by staff who were observed to be taking a genuine interest in the children, having fun and chatting to them about what they were doing. When asked about positive aspects of their children's experience, one parent told us; [My child's] ability to develop [their] social skills which was a struggle before nursery." Another parent said "Friendships, outdoor experiences, different aspects of learning from the home environment." Staff took time to support, speak and listen to children which contributed to them being settled and confident in the setting.

Staff communicated well, were flexible and moved around with children depending on their interests and needs. They respectfully asked each other for support and also offered help to colleagues. Staffing levels and deployment throughout the day mostly supported the wellbeing and safety of children using the service. However, at lunchtime we found some staff too task focussed and unsure of their roles, meaning children were not being well supported and supervised to benefit from a relaxed, social experience. We asked that management review staff deployment at lunchtime to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.

Staff were appropriately qualified, some working towards gaining further qualifications and had a good knowledge of child development. They were able to discuss how they had identified areas for development and were supporting children with their social skills, confidence, and speech. This meant that children were cared for by staff who had the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience.



Staff undertook regular training and were able to reflect on their practice and discuss the impact training had on outcomes for children. For example, a staff member had completed training to support children with additional support needs. They were able to talk about strategies they now use to tailor support for children daily. It was clear staff training was having an impact and was improving outcomes for children in the setting.

## 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 ensure children are nurtured and supported through their daily experiences, the manager and staff should ensure that mealtimes are a safe, relaxing experience that meet the individual needs of children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: 'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19) and 'I can enjoy an unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible' (HSCS 1.35).

**This area for improvement was made on 19 April 2024.**

#### Action taken since then

We recognised improvements had been made around meal times. On the first day of inspection, in one room, children experienced a relaxed, social mealtime, which was well supervised, with opportunities to be independent. In the other room, some consideration still had to be given to wait times for the children. We discussed this with management and it was better managed on the second day. **This area for improvement has been met.**

#### Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure high quality care and experiences for children quality assurance and self-evaluation should be embedded into practice. This should mean that:

- (a) Children and families are meaningfully involved and influence changes within the setting.
- (b) Quality assurance, including effective audits and monitoring would allow management to evaluate data and identify areas for development, leading to high quality care and support.

This is in to ensure 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 systems' (HSCS 4.19).

**This area for improvement was made on 19 April 2025.**

## Action taken since then

Parental engagement had been an improvement focus for the setting. They were making good of the 'Seesaw' app, parents had helped with garden developments and PEEP sessions had been offered. Responses to questionnaires were still poor and the setting were considering other ways to gain feedback from families. Audits were now in place to support developments within the setting. **This area for improvement has been met.**

## 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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