

# Culter School Nursery Day Care of Children

22 School Road  
Peterculter  
AB14 0RX

Telephone: 01224 733 197

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
28 March 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Aberdeen City Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003000349

**Service no:**  
CS2003014421

## About the service

Culter School Nursery is registered to provide day care of children service to a maximum of 48 children at any one, from 3 years to those not yet attending primary school. Minimum adult:child ratios will be: 3 and over - 1:8 if the children attend more than 4 hours per day, or 1:10 if the children attend for less than 4 hours per day.

The nursey is situated within Culter School on School Road, Culter. The nursery is close to local amenities and easy bus travel. The playroom provides a spacious area for children with direct access to an enclosed outdoor play space.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 25 March 2025 and 26 March 2025 between the hours of 09:15 and 17:30. 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.

To inform our evaluation we:

- Spoke with children and families
- Received 29 completed questionnaires
- Spoke with staff and management
- Observed children's experiences
- Reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children's overall wellbeing was supported by staff who knew them well.
- Mealtimes were unhurried, and children benefited from the relaxed and homely atmosphere created.
- Effective personal planning, created in partnership with families, reflected the needs of each child which supported their wellbeing.
- Children were having fun with lots to do and explore. Children moved confidently between the indoor and outdoor spaces and were regularly out playing in the nursery garden.
- Quality observations and assessments was not yet consistent to ensure progress for all children.
- Families had a variety of ways to become involved in influencing change within the setting.
- There were some opportunities for children to influence change however this was in the early stages of development and should continue to improve.
- There was a good mix of skills and experience across the staff team which contributed to positive outcomes for 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 different parts of this key question as very good and good, with an overall grade of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

### 1.1 Nurture care and support.

Children's overall wellbeing was supported by staff who knew them well. Parents gave us feedback such as, 'The staff are very warm and welcoming, they know all about my child' and 'Staff make an effort to get to know my child.' Staff were knowledgeable about the individual needs of children and used this to provide respectful and nurturing care. Children were welcomed into the setting on arrival and supported to settle into their day at nursery. When staff listened to children, their positive body language, tone of voice and facial expressions conveyed to the children that they were being heard and that their voices mattered. This supported children to build relationships with staff and feel secure.

Snack and mealtimes were unhurried, and children benefited from the relaxed and homely atmosphere created. They were provided with opportunities to develop self-help skills, responsibility, and independence. For example, during the meal they poured their own drinks, and cleared away their plates. Throughout the day children helped with food preparation tasks such as chopping fruits and the setting up of tables. Staff sat with children during meals which helped build attachments and develop language skills which impacted positively on children's health and wellbeing. Staff supported the individual needs of children and were adaptable to their preferences. As a result, all children enjoyed an appetising meal at their own pace. Staff supported and encouraged children to drink fluids throughout the day. This supported children to be healthy.

The pace of the day was considered by staff. Children had access to a range of activities indoors and out. Some children used quieter activities such as reading stories, puzzles, or sensory play to have restful or quiet periods when needed. Staff were attuned to this and supported children when needed.

Effective personal planning, created in partnership with families, reflected the needs of each child which supported their wellbeing. These were up to date and accessible to parents online using the See Saw app. All families we received feedback from told us they felt involved in their child's plan and liked the See Saw platform for sharing information and seeing photographs of their child. The use of the wellbeing indicators helped provide a holistic overview of each child. When needed, clear strategies on how to support children were in place. Termly reviews provided parents with a sense of their child's experiences and achievements at nursery. We suggested some improvements such as the need to ensure there is a clear record of parent reviews and ways in which agreed 'goals' for individual children can be more effective in tracking personal progress and achievements.

Staff demonstrated a commitment to collaborating with other professionals to meet children's individual needs. Early intervention and ongoing assessment meant all children were included in nursery experiences and receiving care that was right for them. This supported them to flourish and thrive and enjoy their time at nursery.

Effective procedures were in place to safeguard children. Staff were knowledgeable on how to respond if they had concerns around a child's wellbeing and welfare. We suggested that senior staff may benefit from extended training which may be beneficial in supporting their role. The appropriate notifications had not

been submitted to the Care Inspectorate. We asked the manager of the service to submit these. This was actioned within the agreed timescale. Accident, incident, medication, and allergy systems were all managed well. This contributed to keeping children safe.

### 1.3 Play and learning

Children were having fun with lots to do and explore. They had opportunities to lead their own learning through a balance of spontaneous and planned play. Children could choose where they spent their time to play and were motivated through interesting resources and planned activities. Children were consistently engaged and enjoyed playing with friends. Many close friendships had been formed. This helped children to learn and develop in a way that was important to them.

Children moved confidently between the indoor and outdoor spaces and were regularly out playing in the nursery garden, experiencing physical play and exercise. Children had fun balancing and jumping on obstacle courses made of large loose parts. They played co-operatively supporting each other with the 'difficult' parts. Children were excited to show us the worms they had found and were caring for in their home made wormery. Others told us about a bug they found. Staff had further supported this spontaneous learning by helping to find out what kind of bug and how to care for it by searching online with children.

Children had opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills. Staff used play and routines to encourage the development of children's skills. For example, meal preparation time incorporated counting, matching, and grouping. Play in areas such as construction supported conversation around height, using language such as taller and smaller. Resources had been provided in most play areas that supported mark making and writing skills. As a result, children enjoyed writing menus and reading recipe books in the house corner, using chalk to draw outdoors, drawing pictures to take home and painting on various materials such as clingfilm. Some children could write their name and were beginning to recognise letters.

There was a mix of planned and spontaneous experiences which supported children to learn and develop through play. These were being documented in intentional and responsive plans through wall displays and a floor book. Staff were not yet confident in applying a sustained and successful planning approach. This had been a key area of development identified by the service and work on this was planned to be continued.

An online digital platform, 'See Saw,' shared children's successes with families. Most observations of children's achievements were individual and focused on learning. Most staff tracked children's progress which helped them to identify the ongoing development needs of children. However, the use of quality observations and assessments was not yet consistent to ensure progress for all children. This was included as a key area of development within the service improvement plan.

Children had opportunities to learn about their community and build connections. The nursery had a good relationship with school and was very much a part of a whole school approach. A recent project surrounding road safety and following the green cross code involved working with primary four pupils. This was extended and used by nursery children during their regular visits to the local library. Parents told us their child enjoyed these visits and spoke about them at home.

## How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good. We found several strengths that impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children enjoyed a welcoming environment which was warm, bright, well-ventilated, and clean. Background music helped to create a comforting place to be. Children's artwork was displayed throughout which helped give children a sense of belonging. Some families we spoke to us told us they liked the outdoor space and open plan design of the nursery.

Infection prevention and control practices were carried out well, reducing children's risk of infections and illnesses. Children were familiar with routines such as handwashing before and after meals. Staff were mindful of ensuring areas used for meals were clean and well maintained throughout the day. Bathrooms were regularly checked and kept clean and inviting for children to use.

Resources and activities were age and stage appropriate. A range of real-life experiences, loose parts and natural materials inspired children's curiosities. Children played cooperatively together and were empowered to choose activities independently. Staff had been evaluating some areas of play to ensure they were inviting and easy for children to use. Staff should continue with this work to build on play areas for children to ensure they meet their ongoing needs.

Children's health and wellbeing was promoted through outdoor play experiences. As a result, children were motivated, engaged and confident. Children had opportunity to freely move around indoors and outdoors through the free flow approach to the garden. The availability of open-ended resources outdoors enabled children to engage their imaginations, develop life skills and spark curiosity.

Children were encouraged to take part in risky play such as climbing, balancing, and jumping outdoors. Indoors children built 'their tallest tower' with construction bricks and enjoyed activities such as exploring water from taps. This was well supported by staff who spent one to one time with individual children or discussed with children how to manage any risk involved in their play. This supported children to explore in a safe way.

Children could freely access the cloak room area to find their peg items or explore some of the displays. However, this meant that there were occasions when children were unsupervised for longer periods of time. Staff should now find ways of ensuring children are safe and well supervised when using this area.

## How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good. We found several strengths that impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### 3.1 Quality Assurance and improvement are led well

The service vision, values and aims were made available to families and supported staff to develop and maintain shared goals. An improvement plan was in place which highlighted priorities and timescales to make improvements and how to take these forward. This had been developed with feedback from staff and families taken into consideration. Key areas of practice had been developed such as the engagement of families within the service. Themed stay and play sessions throughout the year had been popular. Feedback

from families reflected this, 'We are welcome any time at nursery, there are also various stay and play events and peep sessions.' This helped create a welcoming nursery for all.

Families had a variety of ways to become involved in influencing change within the setting. Various methods were available such as questionnaires, suggestion boxes and polls. These were used well throughout the year to encourage feedback. Staff used these to review areas of practice such as family induction into the service or to ask questions such as 'do staff make you feel welcome?', or 'do nursery staff know your child and their needs well?' Feedback consistently showed a high level of satisfaction. Any suggestions from families were taken onboard and actioned. This collaborative approach helped support the continued progress of nursery.

Regular staff involvement in identifying and planning for improvement was in place. They regularly evaluated as a team through informal discussions and surveys. Staff were familiar with a range of quality assurance documents and used these to assess their practice and experiences for children. Staff were developing the process around planning for children's learning. They found visiting other services in the local area helpful to share practice and be inspired. Team meetings give staff the opportunity to have focused discussions, however, these were not yet regular enough to be of full benefit.

There were some opportunities for children to influence change however this was in the early stages of development and should continue to improve. Children had been asked what they liked and disliked in nursery, and this had been used by staff when evaluating resources. A new child friendly voting system had been introduced and was beginning to look at questions such as 'do you like the outside play area?' This was beginning to have an impact in ensuring children feel respected and confident to voice an opinion.

## How good is our staff team?

**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good. We found several strengths that impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### 4.3 Staff deployment

The service was appropriately staffed to meet the needs of the children. There was a good mix of skills and experience across the staff team which contributed to positive outcomes for children. Breaks were well planned which allowed staff to eat and rest with minimised disruption to children's routines. Any staff absence was planned for whenever possible. Supply staff were familiar with the setting, the children, and their needs. Staff had the skills and experience to support children well and worked together as a team. This approach meant that children were well cared for throughout the day.

The staff were committed to the ongoing development of the nursery and to their own continued professional development (CPD). Some were undertaking a childcare qualification for the first time, while others chose to update an existing qualification to maintain knowledge of current practice ideas. Other staff had completed CPD in areas such as outdoor learning or the 'People Learning Together Programme' (PEEP). This had positively impacted on children's experiences available to them, such as a valued approach to outdoor learning and family engagement.

Staff were well supported within the setting by each other and the leadership team. New staff to the setting completed an induction programme. They told us they found this supportive and helped them get to know the role. This was adaptable to meet the needs of each staff member and their previous experience. A staff survey had looked at staff wellbeing and showed an improvement in this area. Support and supervision were

available to staff which helped support their individual practice. As a result, children benefited from care from a staff team who were happy. Comments we received included, 'Staff are always lovely and keen to help', 'I feel confident my child is cared for and well looked after', 'My child loves going to nursery and is so happy in the setting' and 'The staff have a lovely way with the children making it fun yet safe.'

## 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's safety the recording and administration and monitoring of medication should be in line with current guidance.

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

'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

**This area for improvement was made on 24 January 2024.**

#### Action taken since then

Approaches to medication supported children's physical health. All medication was recorded, administered, and stored appropriately. This contributed to keeping children safe and healthy.

**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	5 - Very 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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