

Hythehill Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

St. Margaret's Crescent
Lossiemouth
IV31 6RF

Telephone: 01343 812 014

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
17 April 2025

Service provided by:
The Moray Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001892

Service no:
CS2003016022

About the service

Hythehill Primary School Nursery is a daycare of children service, registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 24 children aged three to those not yet of an age to attend primary school at any one time. During August, children aged two years 11 months may attend the service. On the day of inspection, 21 children were present. The service is provided by Moray Council.

The service operates from a room within Hythehill Primary School in Lossiemouth. Children have access to an enclosed garden area, accessible directly from the playroom.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 16 April 2025, between 9.00am and 3.00pm. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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 five children using the service;
- reviewed feedback received from four families;
- spoke with staff and management;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment;
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors;
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met; and
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Nurturing and caring approaches supported children to feel confident and secure.
- Staff knew children and their families well, which contributed to children meeting their potential.
- Children were engaged in a wide range of experiences, which supported development of early language, literacy and numeracy skills.
- Effective improvement planning was leading to improved outcomes for children and their families.
- Staff were enthusiastic and motivated to provide children with high quality care and support. As a result, children benefited from positive experiences.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very 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?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff were warm, caring and nurturing in their approaches to support children. They supported children to manage their emotions with gentle conversation, offering cuddles, and hands to hold. This contributed towards children being able to safely express their needs. One parent told us "I like how welcoming the staff are to the kids and parents and how happy all the kids are". As a result, children felt confident and secure.

Children's wellbeing was effectively supported through personal planning which was reviewed regularly with families and children. Staff knew children well and were aware of their individual needs. When required, staff worked closely with other professionals. They were skilled at recognising where children may benefit from additional interventions. This was managed sensitively to ensure children received the support that was right for them in a timely manner. As a result, children were supported to achieve their full potential.

Snack and mealtimes were calm and relaxed. Children had opportunities to develop their independence skills, for example selecting cutlery and crockery, pouring drinks and were serving their own food with confidence. Children enjoyed their morning snack when they wanted to, which reduced any interruptions to their play. Some children had their snack in the garden, supported by staff who sat with them. Staff were focussed on children, recognising the value of these daily routines in building strong relationships, and as an opportunity to consolidate learning through fun conversation. Food offered was healthy and nutritious, and individual preferences were catered for. As a result, children enjoyed a positive, social experience.

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of the processes they would follow if they had any concerns about children's wellbeing. Accurate record keeping meant that relevant staff had the information they needed. They recognised the importance of supporting families to build resilience where needed. This contributed to children reaching their full potential.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were having fun as they played. They were able to lead their own play for most of the day, choosing where they wanted to play. Resources were displayed in a way that engaged their curiosity and encouraged them to take ownership of their play. As a result, all children were engrossed in play for long periods of time.

Children benefited from a rich, multi-sensory environment. Resources reflected children's interests, both inside and outside. Parents commented on the positive impact that playing outside had on their children. Comments included "My son is always afforded the opportunity to play outside, the nursery have a brilliant set up and do things like planting of seeds" and "my children love especially the sand shed. My child learned to ride their bike at age three from the help of staff."

Play experiences supported children's developing imagination. For example, a group of children were building a camp fire using wooden blocks. Staff skilfully extended their play to set up a camp. Children were discussing what they could see in the night sky such as the moon and stars, singing familiar songs as they played. This engaged children's imagination and enriched their play and learning.

Staff use skilled interactions to support children's developing early literacy, language and numeracy skills. Some children were measuring objects, using a variety of resources such as metre sticks and measuring tapes, while others enjoyed reading together. Staff asked children meaningful questions, introduced new language and supported children to consolidate their learning through familiar play and learning opportunities, such as reading favourite stories. Staff recognised when to engage and when to stand back, which contributed to children developing their play at their pace.

Planning approaches were responsive to children's interests and life experiences. Staff were skilled at recognising where gaps might exist in children's development, introducing appropriate play and learning opportunities to bridge identified gaps. Learning was shared in a meaningful way for children and their families, through both online and paper formats. The use of technology, for example QR codes within learning journeys, provided parents with an opportunity to view videos of their child's play and learning. Staff undertook skilled observations, using this information to plan for individual children. As a result, children were progressing well.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

The setting was warm and welcoming, and furnished to a high standard. The playroom was well ventilated and full of natural light. Children had ample space to play in, with resources displayed in a way that encouraged their independence and curiosity. This gave children a strong message that they mattered.

Resources were well maintained and the setting was secure. Staff recognised the importance of supporting children to build their resilience through risky play experiences. Children were climbing, and riding wheeled toys, having fun as they pushed their own boundaries. Staff had a good understanding of risk assessing different activities, supporting children to recognise where risk may occur. This meant that children's activities were not compromised.

Displays around the rooms were used to reflect children's interests and experiences. This provided opportunities for children to revisit their play and learning and share their achievements, which contributed to children's sense of pride.

The setting was clean and tidy. Staff followed best practice guidance, ensuring a safe play and learning environment. Robust infection control practices minimised the potential spread of infection, for example children were confident in their hand washing routines at snack and lunchtimes. This reduced the risk of possible spread of infection.

Arrangements for storage of children and families' personal information was well managed. Information was stored securely in line with guidance. This contributed to children and families' confidentiality being maintained.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

A shared vision, values and aims positively informed practice, supporting positive outcomes for children and their families. The manager valued the opinion of children and their families. All parents who gave feedback told us they were always welcomed into the setting, with most strongly agreeing that they and their children were meaningfully involved in developing the setting. They were invited to give feedback in a number of ways, such as completing settling in surveys and during face to face visits to the setting. Feedback was used to inform positive change. For example, recent changes to arrangements for drop off and collection of children had improved opportunities for daily communication. One parent commented, "They are always asking for ideas and suggestions from the parent group and children to help improve their service." This meant that children and their families were meaningfully involved in shaping the life of the setting.

Effective improvement planning was leading to improved outcomes for children. The manager considered relevant data and feedback received from other professionals, when identifying key areas of improvement. Robust formal and informal quality assurance processes allowed focussed and meaningful opportunities for the manager and staff to review and monitor various aspects of the service. This resulted in areas for improvement being identified promptly, shared with staff and actions taken to make positive changes to children's experiences.

Staff were meaningfully and actively involved in the self-evaluation process. There were regular team meetings where all staff were supported to reflect on the service provided, evaluate learning opportunities and resources available. They could also share any feedback or suggestions they might have with the manager while they were in the playrooms on a regular basis. All staff told us they felt supported and valued, and respected as a skilled team. They confidently spoke about how they had been actively involved in self-evaluation, the identification of priorities, introducing improvements and how these had positively impacted on the care, play and learning of the children.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

Staff were caring and nurturing, enthusiastic and motivated to provide children with high quality experiences. They were committed to providing a positive experience for all children. They were warm and friendly in their approach which promoted a happy and inclusive environment where children could play and have fun. Several parents spoke positively about the staff team. Comments from parents included, "They are amazing at communicating, incredibly approachable and just brilliant" and "The staff are wonderful, the experiences, care and stimulation my child gets is amazing".

Overall, staff deployment was effective in meeting the needs of children. There was a good mix of skills, knowledge and experience across the staff team, which contributed to children having positive experiences. Staff received breaks to keep them refreshed, however this impacted on children's choices and experiences for a short period of time. The manager had recognised this as an area for improvement, and additional staffing had been agreed with the provider.

The ethos between team members was positive and interactions between staff were kind and respectful. This helped create a positive atmosphere for both staff and children to feel comfortable and secure in. Staff communicated well with each other when a task took them away from their designated area. For example, they would inform each other when leaving the room or when attending to a child's needs. As a result, children were sufficiently supervised throughout the day.

Positive working relationships had been formed between staff which meant they were all meaningfully contributing to the inclusive and positive ethos of trust and respect. Regular meetings took place to share information. As a result, the staff team worked collaboratively and supported each other well.

Complaints

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

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

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