

# Lunnasting Nursery Day Care of Children

Lunnasting Primary School  
Vidlin  
Shetland  
ZE2 9QB

Telephone: 01595 745 690

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
2 May 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Shetland Islands Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002063

**Service no:**  
CS2008184975

## About the service

Lunnasting Nursery operates from a classroom within Lunnasting Primary School in Vidlin, a village on the east coast of mainland Shetland. The premises consist of a playroom and outdoor shelter. Children have direct access to toilets, nappy changing areas, and kitchen facilities. The service has free-flow access from the playroom to an outdoor space which is shared with the school. Children also have access to a garden as well as the rest of the playground on the premises.

Lunnasting Nursery provides a care service to a maximum of 12 children aged three years to not yet attending primary school.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 01 May 2025 between the hours of 08:30 and 15:15. 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 children during their play.
- Spoke with staff and management.
- Spoke with parents/carers during the visit.
- Received three parent/carer online questionnaires.
- Observed practice and daily experiences.
- Reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Children were happy, confident and settled.
- Children were leaders of their own play and learning and could transport resources to meet their interests.
- The staff team worked well together to meet children's needs.
- Staff used their skills and knowledge to ensure high quality outcomes for children.
- The setting should take time to develop their outdoor space to ensure it is inviting and offers a range of play and learning for the children.
- The setting should ensure effective quality assurance systems are embedded into practice to support 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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very 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. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

### Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm and nurturing care from staff. Children were very settled, relaxed, and confident. When children needed reassurance or support, we saw that staff were responsive to their needs. Positive attachments had been formed which supported children to feel safe and secure.

Staff knew children very well and were able to confidently discuss their interests, likes, dislikes, and support needs. Parents felt they had a very good relationship with the staff caring for their children. One parent said; "They are so very welcoming and approachable. You can see they love what they do and have such lovely relationships with the children who attend. I feel comfortable sharing any information with them in regard to our [child], and they always handle things like this sensitively and discretely." Another parent said; "All staff are very friendly and approachable." This promoted a supportive ethos of children's needs being well met.

Children's wellbeing and progress was supported through personal planning. Plans contained registration details and 'What matters to me' information which captured children's likes/dislikes, routines and interests. Personal planning documents were individualised for each child, including what they were being supported with and strategies used. Evaluating and reviewing these plans regularly with families ensured they contained relevant and the most up-to-date information. We discussed the benefit of including the wellbeing indicators within the plans which would support a holistic approach to care and support and would allow staff to more effectively track progress in health and wellbeing.

A free flow system was in place for snack in the play room. Children went through to the dining hall with the older children for lunch. Nursery children went through slightly earlier to allow them to be served their food and sit down. While the hall was busy, the children enjoyed seeing family members and friends and were still able to enjoy a calm meal time at their pace. Staff sat with children, providing support and keeping them safe as they ate. Friendships and positive social interactions were promoted through chatting together about the activities the children had enjoyed. Children ate food that was nutritious and supported their preferences and dietary needs. There were opportunities for children to develop independence through preparing snack, serving some food and drinks and scraping their plates. This meant children were experiencing mealtimes that were unhurried and relaxed, ensuring a caring and positive social experience.

Medication was stored securely out of children's reach and the records we sampled contained relevant information to support the safe administration of medication. We discussed the benefits of developing the settings procedures for the management of medication in line with best practice guidance. We also highlighted the value of undertaking regular audits of information held to ensure it was completed in full. This would mean all relevant information was available to staff, contributing to the children's health and wellbeing.

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had fun and were fully engaged throughout the inspection.

Staff were very responsive to children's interests and supported their choices with regard to where they wanted to play.

The pace of the day was very relaxed and unhurried which meant children had time to explore their interests and ideas. Children had opportunities to lead their play and we saw them problem solve, use their imagination and be creative. We saw the children have fun mixing paint and creating patterns with a salad spinner. In the morning staff modelled to children how the salad spinner was used and children copied. The children went back and forth to this activity and by the afternoon children were doing this independently. They were able to select colours they wanted, squeeze paint out of the bottles and spun the salad spinner to create patterns. Children were keen to share these creations with staff and peers. Children were using the range of resources available to them very well and this supported their curiosities and creativity.

Staff interactions were patient and encouraging. During discussions with children, staff adapted their language and pace, which supported children's understanding. Staff were skilled and knew when to step back and observe, and when to intervene with open-ended questions to support children's thinking. For example, when playing outdoors with pots, pans and a selection of ingredients like water, oatmeal and hot chocolate, the children were making 'chocolate soup.' They worked together to pour and whisk. The staff member stood back and allowed children time to investigate and problem solve together. When appropriate, they used open questions such as "it's gone stodgy, what do you need to do?" and "it's lipperin, what does that mean?" This extended the children's thinking and developed their play experiences.

Opportunities for literacy and numeracy were embedded within children's play and the environment. Children engaged very well with real resources such as packaging, scales and old phones in the house corner. Adults sang and read stories with children spontaneously and in groups. Children particularly enjoyed the stories read to them in Shetland dialect. Vocabulary and mathematical language were being supported through play, such as playing number games together. Children benefited from a variety of books and mark making materials available throughout the environment and used these to support their play and learning. Most of the opportunities available for literacy and numeracy took place indoors, we discussed the benefit of extending this outside. This would contribute to the development of children's early language, literacy and numeracy skills.

Planning processes were very effective. Staff worked together to promote a balance of intentional and responsive learning experiences for the children. This was evident in the floor book and the approach to learning during the inspection. Floor books were used to evidence learning and highlight the child's voice. Staff took time to evaluate learning together which ensured that children's strengths, needs and next steps were being well supported. We discussed the benefits of recording some more of the children thoughts and the main points of reflection in the floor book. This would highlight the depth and breadth of learning experiences.

Learning stories were on children's pegs for families and children to access daily. These were used to capture children's play and learning through observations. This approach provided an opportunity for families to see this in detail. The observations sampled identified learning. This supported staff to assess children's progress and achievements, supporting them to plan the next steps. The setting was successfully tracking children's progress, which allowed them to identify gaps in learning and tailor support and challenge.

Children benefited from very good connections with the school and wider community. Children had access to areas within the school including the playground, garden and hall. Children enjoyed regular walks within the community to the local beach, for example.

They welcomed local visitors from the community such as families with new kittens. This contributed to children's sense of belonging and supported them to have different opportunities in and out with the setting.

## How good is our setting?

## 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

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

Children experienced an environment that was well furnished and maintained with plenty of ventilation and natural light. Children's artwork and family photographs were displayed, providing children with ownership of their setting as well as creating a sense of belonging. Resources were of a good quality and included loose parts and open ended, real resources to promote children's curiosity imagination and creativity. Soft furnishings, such as chairs, rugs and cushions provided cosy spaces for children to rest during their day at nursery.

The layout of indoor play spaces ensured that children could move around areas with ease, allowing them to access resources independently. We saw that staff continually reviewed the layout of the environment and made changes to support the children's interests. Shelves and units at the appropriate height and some labelled boxes contributed to this. Children were confident while moving around these spaces and used resources well to support their ideas and interests. They also had the freedom to transport and move around resources to extend their play and learning further.

Children had free-flow access to the outdoor shelter and outdoor space. Children had fun as they explored different types of water play. We discussed developing the outdoors to make it more inviting and offer a greater range of experiences daily. The setting already had plans to develop planting in the greenhouse in the garden area. Parents told us their children's development was supported through interesting and fun play experiences and they had the opportunity to play outdoors. One parent said; "Snack preparation, outings, block play, social interaction and development, gym, library, Friday fun." Another parent said; "I feel as though the nursery always provides a breadth of activities for the children to participate in. In dropping our [child] off each morning, there is always something set out (whether inside or outside), and I often get a quick report from a member of staff on collecting our [child] as to what they have been up to that day (walks to the beach, up to the park, up in the school garden, through into the school, etc)." This contributed to their health and wellbeing, extended their play and learning, and gave children choice in where to play.

Systems were in place to help keep children safe. Risk assessments helped staff to mitigate risk and enhanced children's safety. Benefits were considered alongside these to support risky play and resilience. We asked that the setting include more information with regard to safety measures for the steps in the outdoor space and boundaries for sharing the school playground. We directed the setting to the Care Inspectorate's SIMOA campaign to support with children being involved in risk assessing. This would support the children's understanding of risk and keeping themselves safe.

Infection control measures were understood and implemented very effectively by staff. Robust hand washing routines were in place, with staff modelling good practice for children. Staff protected children by providing a clean and hygienic environment and personal protective equipment (PPE) was used at appropriate times, such as during food preparation. This contributed to keeping children safe and well.

## How good is our leadership?

## 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

## Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are led well

The school recently updated their vision, values and aims involving staff, children and families including nursery. This supported everyone to feel valued and included. The nursery also created a 'promise' together. This was written in Shetland dialect, making that strong connection with their culture and reflected the nursery's ethos well.

Children's and families' views and suggestions about their care, play, and learning were valued by staff. The feedback we received from parents highlighted that they felt they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service, but felt parental opinions could be sought more. We saw that some attempts had been made to seek family's views, around mealtimes and values for example, however, this could be further developed. We discussed ways in which this could be implemented to ensure parents felt listened to, meaning there was a collaborative approach to improvement. **(see area for improvement 1)**

Staff told us they felt well supported by leaders and their team in the setting and were motivated to improve the service provided. We saw that a recent ESO (education support officer) visit had supported improvement with the setting. We discussed how this could be developed through regular staff monitoring and continuous conversations. This would contribute to developing staff's confidence, skills and knowledge within their practice. **(see area for improvement 1)**

An action plan identified relevant and meaningful areas for development. We discussed the benefits of adding success criteria and timescales to this document. A self-evaluation floor book was in the early stages of being implemented to document improvement planning and captured progress made. This system will allow the team to acknowledge their successes and help to measure the impact improvements have had against the success criteria. This will support the pace of change and ensure improvement is ongoing. **(see area for improvement 1)**

We suggested the nursery setting started implementing its own quality assurance calendar to effectively support audits, procedures and monitoring within the nursery. The outcomes should be evaluated and shared with staff to ensure everyone is clear on the outcomes and the impact of these. **(see area for improvement 1)**

## Areas for improvement

1. 1. To support positive and improved outcomes for children and families, the manager should ensure effective quality assurance systems are embedded into practice. This should include but not be limited to;
  - a) Children and families being meaningfully involved and influencing changes within the setting.
  - b) Regular, effective and focused monitoring being carried out across the setting.
  - c) Regular continuous conversations in place to support staff practice and professional development.
  - d) Action plans to include success criteria and timescales in order to measure the impact of developments on outcomes for children.
  - e) Quality assurance calendar supporting audits and monitoring, developed and implemented, with any actions addressed promptly.

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).

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

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

### Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff demonstrated a real interest and warmth towards the children they cared for. Parents told us that, overall, they were very happy with the care and support their child received at the setting. One parent said; "Our [child] adores the staff at Lunnasting. They are welcoming and happy to help in any kind of transition (i.e. finding it difficult to be left, having some issues with toileting, etc). The Lunnasting nursery is a lovely small setting where our [child] quickly felt happy to attend. The sessions they put on inviting the local under 5 group to attend the nursery for a morning, playing with the toys and interacting with the kids who attend the nursery. The staff are quick to recognise the children's interest and find ways to enhance this and their learning about the topic (i.e. dinosaurs, sea life, Vikings, etc.)." Another parent said; "I think seeing my child come home in paint or other messy play shows she's had a great day of playing." This supported children to feel very settled, happy and valued in the setting.

The leadership team recognised the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed at all times. The deployment of staff was very effective. They were flexible in their approach while communicating well with each other. Staff moved with children, where needed, to support the effective running of the service and meet the needs of children. Parents were welcomed into the setting at the beginning and end of the day, with some staying for period to their child. This resulted in staff having the opportunity to share information with parents about their child's day and form very good relationships.

Staff were appropriately qualified. Some were working towards gaining further qualifications and had a very good knowledge of child development. Staff were able to discuss how they had identified individual areas for development and were supporting children with their social skills, confidence, and speech and language. Staff were very committed to their professional development ensuring they delivered a high-quality service and improved outcomes for children. Staff had undertaken a range of learning which included formal training, professional discussions, and self-directed reading. This supported staff to develop their knowledge and skills. As a result, children's care, play, and learning was informed by best practice and current research.

Staff inductions and mentors had supported good staff knowledge and awareness of their role and responsibilities. We saw the Shetland Island Council used the 'Early Learning and Childcare National Induction Resource' to support inductions for staff. This supported staff to have a very good understanding of their roles, responsibilities, and effective ways of working.

## 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?	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?	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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

## To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com)

## Contact us

Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

## Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.