

Abbey Primary School Nursery Class

Day Care of Children

Claremont Crescent
Kilwinning
KA13 7HD

Telephone: 01294 552 251

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 April 2025

Service provided by:
North Ayrshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003327

Service no:
CS2003016034

About the service

Abbey Primary School Nursery Class provides a daycare of children's service to a maximum of 40 children aged from 3 years to not yet attending primary school.

At the time of our inspection, 38 children were registered with the service; across the morning and afternoon sessions, 31 children aged 3-5 attended the service on the first day of the inspection and 34 on the second day.

Abbey Primary School Nursery Class is provided by North Ayrshire Council and is based within Abbey Primary School in the town of Kilwinning, North Ayrshire. It is located in a residential area close to local amenities, including shops and bus routes.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 23 April 2025 between 09:45 and 17:00 and Thursday 24 April 2025 between 09:45 and 16:30. We gave feedback to the service on Thursday 24 April 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service
- received seven completed Microsoft Forms questionnaires
- spoke with staff and the senior leadership team
- observed practice and daily life
- 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
- 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

- Children received nurturing approaches from staff that helped them feel emotionally safe and secure.
- Inclusive approaches helped children express their needs and make choices, which supported their emotional regulation and overall wellbeing.
- Personal planning ensured consistency in care and met children's individual needs.
- Improvements to the lunchtime routine would ensure a calm, organised, and positive experience for all children.
- Medication procedures should be improved to support children's health, wellbeing, and safety.
- Play areas supported children's needs and interests and offered a safe and stimulating environment.
- Self-evaluation and quality assurance processes should continue to be developed to ensure measurable improvements across service areas over time.
- Staff had diverse skills, knowledge, and expertise and were developing individually and as a team.
- Staff training supported professional development and improved 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 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 kind and caring and used nurturing approaches that helped children feel emotionally safe and secure. As a result, most children were confident, happy, and settled and formed close attachments with staff and their peers.

Children received calm and supportive responses from staff and benefited from Makaton signs used to enhance their communication skills. This inclusive approach helped children to express their needs and make choices and played a crucial role in their emotional regulation and overall wellbeing.

The service should continue with its plan to incorporate soft furnishings indoors. This would create a cosy and inviting environment for children to relax and unwind, supporting their emotional security and comfort.

Children had a personal care plan and an additional support for learning plan when needed. The plans included set targets and strategies and were developed with children's families. One parent commented, "I can provide input into their development plans, which are discussed fairly regularly". Another said, "Staff listen to the goals we have for our child and explain how they will support them in reaching those goals. They are also very knowledgeable about the children and often suggest additional ways to help". This ensured consistency in care and met children's individual needs.

Children's personal care was carried out with sensitivity, which safeguarded their privacy and dignity. This approach enhanced children's security and confidence and fostered positive relationships with staff.

Children enjoyed nutritious meals that were thoughtfully prepared to meet their specific allergies and dietary needs. While most staff actively engaged with children at the dining tables during lunchtime, there needed to be increased supervision to support meaningful interactions and enhance the overall quality of engagement. This would strengthen relationships among peers and staff, create a positive attitude towards food and improve children's safety and wellbeing.

Children had opportunities to practice and develop their independence skills. For instance, they took turns pouring their drinks, skilfully used utensils to serve themselves portions of potatoes and vegetables and responsibly cleared their dishes and food waste into the recycling bin once they finished eating. This encouraged children to be self-sufficient and have a sense of responsibility.

The head teacher shared how staff had evaluated the lunchtime routine. They recognised the need for ongoing improvements and expressed their commitment to making further adjustments to ensure that mealtimes were calm, organised, and positive experiences for all children.

Medication was stored out of children's reach, which kept them safe. Staff should update the medication paperwork to include that the child had received the first dose at home and add the medication expiry and the issue date to support safe administration. Additionally, staff should record when medication has been returned to the parent. This would maintain accurate records for supporting children's health, wellbeing, and safety.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children's right to play was supported through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities during play and small group sessions. This approach helped them follow their interests, supported creativity and fostered relationships with their peers.

Children chose how to spend their time at nursery, which allowed them to make decisions about their learning. They played on bikes in the courtyard, used chalk for mark-making, and learned about planting. These activities helped them understand the world around them, encouraged early writing skills, and presented challenges in their play. Engaging in these experiences fostered essential life skills, self-confidence, and an understanding of their limits while they had fun.

Children developed their early literacy skills through various activities. They listened to stories that sparked their imagination, sang songs that fostered language recognition, and expressed their creativity by drawing pictures. Additionally, children's coat pegs helped them recognise their names.

Children were actively encouraged to identify and recognise numbers, using number fans during collaborative group activities, which allowed them to explore numerical concepts in a fun and interactive way. The SMART board was used during play sessions, where children interacted with digital content, enhancing their learning experience through technology. To enrich children's developmental journey and expand their skills in early numeracy and digital literacy, providing additional, structured learning experiences daily would support further children's progression, creativity, and development of new skills.

Children made playdough with added textures, including cucumber pieces and plants from the courtyard. They transported their creations to the home corner, where they made pretend food for their friends, staff and visiting inspectors. This engaging activity sparked their imaginations and helped them relate their learning experiences to real-life situations.

Staff used tracking tools to document and assess children's health and wellbeing and their progress in numeracy and literacy. Previous experiences linked with children's interests were captured in a detailed floorbook. This method showed their learning journey, particularly around the storybook "The Three Bears", and encouraged decision-making and critical thinking skills across curricular areas. This child-centred approach could be reinstated to assist children in developing their ideas.

Staff used an online app to share information with families about what their child had learned in the setting. Staff should continue to develop learning journals, ensuring the information provided includes detailed evidence of children's progress and planned next steps. This would keep parents informed about their child's achievements and challenges.

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

Children attended a welcoming and comfortable environment that was appropriately furnished and ventilated. Informative displays in the entrance areas fostered family engagement and involvement. Each child had a designated personal space for their belongings, contributing to their sense of security, emotional wellbeing, and inclusion within the setting.

Play areas supported children's needs and interests and offered a safe and stimulating environment. Age-appropriate resources, such as loose parts and open-ended building materials, supported children when they made football goals and encouraged exploration, creativity, and social interaction.

Overall, the nursery was clean, and staff and children practised good hand hygiene. We discussed where infection prevention and control procedures could be improved. This included storing porous items in lidded boxes or containers in the toilet and nappy changing area and ensuring the toilet door to the playroom remained closed. This would minimise cross-contamination and prevent potential risks in the spread of infection.

There were initial concerns about the flooring in the playroom, which posed risks of contamination and tripping hazards. The headteacher was aware of these issues and had taken temporary measures to address them, including reporting the problem to the local authority. The local authority sent representatives to evaluate the torn flooring during the inspection. We requested the service submit an SCSWIS notification through the eForms system with a timeline plan and provide updates to the Care Inspectorate regarding the improvements made. This would help ensure the safety of children and minimise the risk of infection.

Boundary fencing, gates, and a secure entry system ensured the safety of children. Risk assessments for individual children and the setting allowed staff to identify and minimise potential concerns. To enhance these assessments, introducing a risk matrix would support staff in identifying and evaluating the impact of risks and further support the safety and wellbeing of children.

A register and whiteboard recorded children's attendance, ensuring their whereabouts were documented during their sessions and kept them safe. Staff strengthened this process by adding dates and times children attended to track their attendance patterns.

Accident and incident forms were completed and shared with families, and appropriate first aid was administered when needed. The forms were regularly audited, which helped identify common or recurring themes and the necessary actions to maintain children's wellbeing and safety.

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

Since the last inspection, there have been changes in the leadership team, including an appointment of a headteacher for the school and nursery and an interim nursery manager. Senior leaders were eager to implement positive changes that would benefit children and families while guiding the future direction of the service. Their openness to feedback, participation in the inspection process, and commitment to improving children's routines and play and learning experiences demonstrated their capacity for growth and positive outcomes for children.

The service values were shared with the school community and helped create a nurturing learning environment. Relevant policies were reviewed, updated, and aligned with current guidance and legislation in response to changes in service delivery. This ensured that children were kept safe and staff had a shared understanding of the service's expectations.

The interim manager visited other childcare services within the local area to support them in monitoring and auditing specific areas within the nursery, focusing on staff's completion of personal plans. This ensured children experienced nurturing care and support that met their needs.

Senior leaders focused on building positive relationships with children and families and staff expectations to ensure children received continuity of care and met their potential. As a result, children were happy and safe and made meaningful progress in their development by staff who knew them well.

The service improvement plan focused on implementing consistent, high-quality approaches to teaching and learning in literacy. This helped create a literacy-rich environment and increased staff knowledge about how children learn through play. The headteacher intends to create a strategic plan to promote ongoing self-evaluation processes and develop an improvement strategy involving the whole school community. This should strengthen relationships between the setting and children's homes, provide a shared understanding of children's needs, and support their progression.

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

Recent changes within the staff team followed the implementation of a revised delivery service model by North Ayrshire Council. This transition resulted in some staff having several years of experience in the service while others had recently joined. There was a diverse range of skills, knowledge, and expertise among the staff, who were developing individually and as a team. Staff communicated openly as they cared for children and responded to their requests, which ensured their needs were met.

Children's transitions were tailored to their needs, and their care and play activities were shared through interactions with families at drop-off and collection times. This fostered a partnership and helped ease the transition from home to nursery at a pace appropriate for each child.

Staff provided a service that aimed to give children the best possible start in life. This commitment helped children develop essential life skills, such as cycling, through staff training in the Play on Pedals programme, which positively impacted children's abilities. Additionally, staff completed child protection training that enhanced their ability to safeguard children. Training on children's rights was also planned to ensure their voices were heard and respected in the setting. This supported professional development and improved outcomes for children.

Staff breaks were effectively managed, which led to limited interruptions in children's activities and daily routines. Additionally, team meetings provided a platform to discuss planning for learning, children's individual needs, and any concerns. The meetings could also be used to clarify roles and responsibilities among staff, foster leadership opportunities, enhance the team's overall success, and positively influence staff morale and the quality of care.

Staff felt supported by senior leaders within the setting, and reinstating individual one to one meetings would provide valuable opportunities for staff to discuss their development goals and concerns related to their overall wellbeing. This would help senior leaders better understand the needs of each staff member and support an environment where staff feel empowered to thrive personally and professionally.

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?	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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