

Banff Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Banff Primary School
Academy Drive
Banff
AB45 1BL

Telephone: 01261 455 758

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 May 2025

Service provided by:
Aberdeenshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000029

Service no:
CS2003016309

About the service

Banff Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 60 children at any one time, not yet attending primary school. No more than 10 are aged two to under three years.

The children are mainly cared for in one large playroom. There is a foyer and cloakroom with direct access to an outdoor play area. The nursery is located in a mainly residential area of Banff, close to local shops and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 14 May 2025 between 09:00 and 17:00 hours and on 15 May between 08:30 and 11:00 hours. 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/spent time with children using the service and eight of their friends and family
- received 24 completed questionnaires (this includes all types)
- spoke with staff and the management team
- observed practice and daily experiences
- 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 were cared for by kind and caring staff.
- Staff knew the children well and were skilled in supporting their care needs.
- Children had fun and were engaged in their play.
- The environment was inviting and spacious, with plenty of room for children to play and move freely.
- Self-evaluation and quality assurance processes were effective to ensure high-quality care and learning opportunities.
- Staff worked well together and were enthusiastic and motivated in their professional development.

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?	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 caring and loving interactions. Staff used gentle voices to provide comfort, and gave cuddles to some children when they were tired. A parent commented, "The staff are super friendly supportive and provide help whenever it is needed. My child loves to attend nursery. They feel safe and cared for."

Staff were respectful and caring when supporting children with their personal care. They were discreet when inviting children for a nappy change and were encouraging in their interactions when helping children wash their hands. This contributed to confident children who felt safe and at ease with staff.

Children's personal plans were effective to support their overall health and wellbeing. Parents were fully involved in the process of developing the children's personal plans and spoke positively about working together and sharing information. This provided staff with a holistic overview of children's health and wellbeing, and helped promote a continuity of care from home.

Knowledgeable and experienced staff demonstrated a very good understanding of supporting children with additional support needs. Clear strategies, developed with the support of other agencies, led to individualised support for each child. This contributed to consistent approaches and children who were well supported.

Mealtimes were well organised, relaxed, and unhurried. Menu choices were appetising and any allergies or food preferences were well catered for. A few children chose to bring their own packed lunch, which meant they ate food they enjoyed. Children's independence was promoted when collecting their own cutlery, pouring their own drinks and self-serving. Staff sat with and positioned themselves well to provide support, encourage social skills and keep children safe when eating.

Children's safety, emotional security, and wellbeing was supported through sensitive arrangements for rest and relaxation. Cosy spaces had been created where children could rest and play quietly. Staff read stories with children, offering opportunities for recuperation and cuddles.

Children were kept safe by staff, knowledgeable in the safe administration of medication. Medication was stored safely, and procedures were followed during its administration.

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of trauma and the impact on children and their families. Positive relationships had been developed with other agencies, such as social work and medical professionals, to help ensure children and families were provided with the support and help they needed.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were actively and meaningfully involved in leading their play. They were able to choose resources and where they played. Some children took part in outdoor water play and had fun squirting water onto a

wall. Other children played happily inside and had fun making jellyfish, reading stories, and playing in the role play corner. Parents commented, "There are always lots of different stations and activities for the children each day."

Child-centred planning approaches were effective to support children's progress and development. Skilled staff used high-quality observations of children at play to develop individualised next steps to support their learning. These were reflected in a range of spontaneous and planned learning experiences. For example, toy trucks and lorries were added to the continuous provision in the playroom in response to a child excited by a visit to a truck show. Floor books had been introduced to capture the children's voice and evidence the learning which had taken place. This led to children who were learning and progressing well.

Staff demonstrated skilled interactions to support children's learning and development. They were very engaging when reading stories and in encouraging children's participation. They modelled play strategies and encouraged children to try new skills. For example, they demonstrated how to use paint rollers to make interesting patterns. Staff were very responsive to children's ideas and excited children had fun looking for boxes to make models. Children showing an interest in volcanoes were supported to research and develop their ideas further. This led to sustained play and high-quality engagement.

Opportunities for learning in language, literacy, and numeracy were embedded in practice. Children enjoyed stories and rhymes and were encouraged to listen, and recall information. Letters and environmental print were displayed on the walls to encourage early reading skills. Clip boards and interesting writing materials were attractively displayed to support early writing and mark making. Children looked for numbers when out for a walk, and took part in group activities to develop an understanding of shape. Board games and puzzles were used well to support both literacy and numeracy.

Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through connections to their own and wider communities. Effective use was made of the school environment, and children were confident in using the hall, and other communal areas. The service made good use of the local amenities and went on regular walks and visits. This included outings to the local care home, benefitting both children and residents.

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; therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

Children were cared for in a bright and comfortable environment. The setting was well maintained, and furnishings and equipment were of good quality. The welcoming foyer and cloakroom were spacious and supported children's independence and self-help skills. For example, when children's feet were wet, they were able to find a change of shoes. Information to support parents was attractively displayed and a community trolley with a range of food items could be easily accessed. This promoted a sense of inclusion and belonging for children and families.

The playroom was spacious and well considered. Children were able to move freely and safely and choose resources independently. Developmentally, appropriate spaces were inviting with resources which reflected children's current interests. For example, a Vet role play area had been created with real life resources, such as a pet bed, towels, blankets, and pet food. The art and craft areas were well stocked and refreshed as needed to ensure the area remained attractive and inviting. A variety of natural materials and loose parts promoted opportunities for creativity and imaginative play.

Staff made good use of the available outdoor space and there were opportunities for water play, planning and climbing. Planned development of the outdoor area was ongoing with more opportunities for digging and resources for the mud kitchen. Parents commented, "My child is always outdoors rain or shine and it's brilliant that the nursery do the same," and "My daughter has opportunities to play outside but the outside space is relatively limited."

Children played in a safe environment. Risk assessments and daily checks helped identify any potential hazards. Children were encouraged to understand the impact of risky play and were supported to make positive choices to keep safe. The setting was kept tidy and clean, and children were fully involved in this. This was supported by good labelling and well thought out spaces.

Staff demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of infection prevention and control. Staff followed guidance when preparing and serving lunch and snacks. Handwashing was embedded in practice to help keep children safe and well.

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; therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

The service was well led by an experienced manager who was well supported by the head teacher and lead practitioners. Staff told us the management team were very approachable and helpful. This contributed to ongoing change and improvement.

The aspirations of families were reflected in the caring and inclusive ethos. Families and children had been consulted and their opinions sought when developing the service vision, values and aims. These had been attractively displayed by a parent, helping to ensure everyone knew what to expect from the service.

Children and families were meaningfully involved in the development of the service. Parents felt very welcomed and there were good opportunities for them to express their views and become involved. Questionnaires had been issued to parents and, as a result, more community walks and Book Bug days (a programme supporting families to read) had been introduced. A 'You said, and we did' approach was displayed in the foyer and kept parents well informed about any changes or new initiatives. Other ways to involve families included helping during walks and visits, and attending play and stay sessions. Parents and families were encouraged into the nursery at drop-off and pick-up times, and able to chat and share information with staff during planned meetings. This led to improved outcomes for children by working together to meet their needs. Staff told us getting the parents back into the service was something they felt very proud of. A parent commented, "Staff are very friendly, and communication is very good between me and the staff."

Self-evaluation and quality assurance processes were fully embedded in practice. Staff were fully involved in the process and felt valued for their opinions. They were able to make suggestions and reflect on their practice during regular team meetings. This led to some changes in practice, such as improved mealtimes. Ongoing staff training and audits of practice contributed to a literacy rich environment with interesting materials which were refreshed each day.

A quality assurance calendar was in place to support the manager and senior staff in their roles. For

example, monitoring of children's personal plans and observations of children at play led to high-quality care and learning experiences.

Modelling of good practice and informal staff monitoring promoted consistent practice and positive learning opportunities.

Continued areas for development included supporting transitions and introducing new systems for recording child protection and GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) concerns.

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.

Staff were very committed and enthusiastic. Some staff had additional responsibility and leadership roles to promote high-quality care and provision. This included promoting nurture and embedding the Care Inspectorate SIMOA (Safe, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act) campaign to keep children safe in nursery. All staff had undertaken training opportunities to refresh their skills, keep up to date with new ideas and learn new knowledge. Staff felt valued for their strengths and experiences which led to a very happy team where children and staff had fun together.

Staff were proud of the strong relationships built with children and their families. They were passionate about providing families with the support they needed during difficult and stressful times. Parents commented, "I feel very welcomed when I walk in and I feel staff really care for my child."

Children were supported by skilled staff. Newer staff benefitted from an effective induction and modelling from staff who were willing to share their skills with others. Staff felt the mix of generations was what made their team so strong.

The approach to staffing meant there were enough staff to keep children safe and well. Staff absences were well managed and covered by staff flexible in their working hours. This meant children were cared for by staff who knew them well. Staff breaks were well planned and did not impact on the supervision of children at busier times of the day, such as arrival and departure.

Children were supported by a team who worked well together. They had developed trusting relations and were proactive in recognising gaps to ensure effective supervision and engagement throughout the day. For example, some staff changed tasks to support tired children who were ready to go home. This contributed to children who received high-quality care and support.

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

In order to ensure continuous improvement in the provision and secure the best possible outcomes for children the management team should continue to develop systematic and in-depth self-evaluation, monitoring and review.

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).

This area for improvement was made on 10 December 2019.

Action taken since then

Self-evaluation and quality assurance processes were fully embedded in practice. This led to high-quality care and support for children and their families.

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.

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?	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

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

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.