

Culbokie Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Culbokie Primary School
Culbokie
Dingwall
IV7 8JH

Telephone: 01349 877 900

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
18 June 2025

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2007145089

About the service

Culbokie Primary School Nursery is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 24 children aged three years to those not yet of an age to attend primary school. Between 08:00 and 09:00 Monday to Friday, term time only, the service may provide a breakfast club from the school canteen for 28 children aged three years to those attending primary school at any one time. On the first day of inspection, 17 children were in attendance in the nursery, and 23 children were in attendance at breakfast club on the second day. The service is provided by Highland Council.

Culbokie Primary School Nursery is situated within the main school building in the village of Culbokie in the Ross and Cromarty area. The nursery consists of a large playroom, a cloakroom area, toilets, and an enclosed outside area accessed from the playroom. Breakfast club is provided in the school canteen and children have access to the gym hall.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 16 and 18 June 2025. 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 six children using the service;
- reviewed feedback received from nine families;
- spoke with five 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

- Staff were warm, caring and nurturing in their approaches to support children. As a result, children felt confident and secure.
- Staff use skilled interactions to support children's developing early literacy, language and numeracy skills.
- The nursery was warm and welcoming, and furnished to a high standard which gave children a strong message that they mattered.
- Robust quality assurance processes allowed focussed and meaningful opportunities for the manager and staff to review and monitor various aspects of the service.
- The staff team had high aspirations for all children, and this was evident in the care and support they received, in both nursery and breakfast club.

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

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 "The kids love the staff and I think the staff are great, so friendly and approachable. Makes me feel so comfortable leaving my children in nursery". 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. Children attending breakfast club also enjoyed eating alongside their peers. 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.

Effective processes and procedures were in place to ensure the safe administration of medication, both in the nursery and the breakfast club. Staff had the relevant information available to them to ensure that medication was given in a timely manner. This contributed to children's overall health and wellbeing.

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, choosing where they wanted to play. Staff respected children's preferences around any planned activities, which contributed to children feeling empowered. 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 in the nursery benefited from a rich, multi-sensory environment, and play experiences supported children's developing imagination. For example, a group of children were building a house in the garden, using large wooden blocks. Staff skilfully interacted, supporting children to extend their play, encouraging them to add resources to their construction. One child told us "We are building a rainbow house" while

another said "I am colouring all the blocks with chalks." This engaged children's imagination and enriched their play and learning.

Children attending breakfast club had access to their own resources, such as arts and crafts, Lego, books and ball games. Staff encouraged play across the different age ranges, which supported children to develop relationships and their sense of self-esteem.

Staff use skilled interactions to support children's developing early literacy, language and numeracy skills. Some children were role playing in a hospital area, using real resources, such as a pulse oximeter to check their pulses. Staff supported children to recognise the numbers, discussing what they might mean. 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. Floor books were used to record children's play and learning. Staff used observations of children's learning to inform achievable, individual targets for each child, in core curriculum areas. They ensured that children received an appropriate amount of challenge to meet their individual learning needs. This meant that all children were supported to reach their potential.

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.

The nursery 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.

Breakfast club was provided in the canteen and gym hall which gave children space to eat and play in. We discussed, with the manager, adding some more comfortable furnishings for children to rest and relax in before they started their school day. The manager identified some potential furnishings, to provide a cosy space for children of all ages to use.

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 breakfast, 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, 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 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, with feedback used to inform positive change. For example, recent changes to arrangements for transition to primary school, and appointments with key workers, were supporting families to be informed and involved. Parents commented:

"Regular invitations from parents to attend the site promotes good conversation and knowledge sharing" and;

"Coffee mornings allow feedback and it is always acted upon."

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?

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 interactions were compassionate, warm and caring. The staff team had high aspirations for all children, and this was evident in the care and support they received. They had developed good relationships with children and their families. Parents commented:

"I can't rate the ladies who work there enough. Such lovely people, caring nurturing and encouraging.."

"(staff) are very professional and good communicators. This is very important to me as a mother. As a parent it's important to feel comfortable and confident to entrust the staff with our children and I feel this is positive for (staff)."

Staff provided individualised support to children, taking time to listen to their views and understand their emotions. As a result, children felt valued and loved.

The setting was effectively staffed, with a very good balance of skills, knowledge and experience, to meet the needs of children. The staff team worked closely together, ensuring that children's needs were not compromised when they were undertaking any tasks, such as personal care or preparation of activities. Staff recognised where gaps might exist, moving about the setting and giving careful consideration to where to position themselves, to ensure children's high-quality experiences were maintained.

Children benefited from consistency of care across the day, from a stable staff team who knew them well which contributed to positive outcomes for all. Staff in breakfast club also worked in the nursery with younger children. This arrangement supported transitions for younger children to nursery. Staff had developed strong relationships with older children attending, who were relaxed and confident in their care.

Staff's wellbeing was a priority, with breaks planned to minimise the impact on children's experiences. There was a very positive ethos, which had been maintained and developed further. Staff interactions with each other were respectful and they worked hard to ensure there was effective supervision and quality engagement with children across the day.

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 improved outcomes for children and families using the service, the provider should ensure robust quality assurance processes are sustained. This should include, but is not limited to developing a shared vision which focusses on improvements and implementing effective self-evaluation processes.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states 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 12 June 2024.

Action taken since then

Robust and effective processes and procedures had been further developed for quality assurance and self-evaluation. The manager monitored key aspects of the service delivered, identifying good practice and any areas for improvement. Staff had developed their skills in relation to self evaluation, which was contributing to children receiving high quality care and support. 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

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