

Elle's ELC Day Care of Children

Unit 4
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Inverurie
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Telephone: 07388343380

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 August 2025

Service provided by:
Elle's ELC LTD

Service provider number:
SP2023000594

Service no:
CS2024000329

About the service

Elle's ELC is situated in the town of Inverurie, Aberdeenshire. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 45 children not yet attending primary school at any one time, of whom no more than 10 are aged under 2 years and no more than 11 are aged 2 years to under 3 years. The service operates 07:30 - 18:30, Monday to Friday.

The service is provided in a previously residential building which has been adapted for use as a daycare of children setting. Children are cared for over two floors; there are two playrooms for different age groups. The service is close to local amenities such as shops and green spaces. There is an enclosed garden and an off-road parking area for parents.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 11 August 2025 between 09:35 and 17:40 and 12 August 2025 between 08:20 and 17:35. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since registration. This was the first inspection of the service.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with children using the service
- spoke with five parents/carers
- received 18 completed questionnaires from parents/carers and staff
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's 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 experienced warm and caring interactions, helping them feel loved, safe and secure.
- Children's opportunities for play and learning were enhanced through meaningful connections with their local community.
- Children experienced an environment which was welcoming and comfortable.
- Management and staff should continue to develop and embed self-evaluation and quality assurance systems which inform the service improvement plan.
- Management and staff were committed to the continued development of the service.

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

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| 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 quality indicator as good. We identified several strengths which impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children were supported by nurturing and caring staff. Staff were responsive to children's needs and children who were new to the service were being supported to develop confidence through staff interactions. This included reassurance, comfort and encouragement. This helped children to feel safe, secure and loved.

Children and their families were welcomed into the service. This supported sharing of information and positive relationships. Families told us they felt connected to the staff caring for their children. One parent commented, "Friendly and responsive staff who clearly care about ensuring children in their care are looked after." Another parent shared: "It's a friendly, welcoming environment. Staff are always helpful and take a lot of interest in my child when they attend."

All children had a personal plan in place. These held information provided by parents to promote staff's knowledge and understanding of children's individual needs. We found that some information had not been updated recently. This has the potential to compromise children's care, play and learning. Management agreed to review arrangements to ensure that all information is reviewed and updated at least every six months in line with guidance. This will ensure that information is up-to-date and relevant in supporting children's current needs.

Children's health was supported by healthy and nutritious meals. These were cooked on the premises and were appetising for children. The mealtime experience for children in the 0-2 room was a sociable, relaxed and calm experience. Babies enjoyed nurturing interactions as staff sensitively supported them with feeding. Older children had opportunities to develop independence and life skills, such as self-serving food and washing their dishes. However, at times, staff did not sit with children as they were focused on other tasks. Such as supporting other children or clearing dishes. This had the potential to impact on children's safety and did not support a social mealtime experience. The manager and staff should continue to review mealtimes to help support positive experiences for children.

Staff were knowledgeable about children's health needs and knew the signs, symptoms and actions to take where a child may require medication. Overall, medication forms contained accurate information. We advised a few improvements to the recording of medication which were immediately actioned by management.

Children's safety, emotional security and wellbeing were supported through sensitive arrangements for sleep, rest and relaxation. Staff followed children's sleep patterns from home to ensure a continuity of care. Children slept in cots or mats on the floor; appropriate supervision ensured their safety.

Children's safety was promoted through staff's understanding of their role in identifying, recording and reporting any safeguarding concerns. Staff attended regular child protection training, and a policy was in place to further support staff in the processes should they identify a concern.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were happy and having fun as they confidently explored the play spaces. They participated in a variety of experiences which were developmentally appropriate and relevant to their interest, such as playing games and cooking in the role play areas. Parents commented positively on the range of play experiences. One parent commented, "Activities are varied and regularly change to support development."

Children benefited from a mix of planned and spontaneous play experiences and staff were continuing to develop their approaches to planning. Children were involved in the planning process as their thoughts and ideas were gathered in floor books and mind maps. Stories and observations of children's learning were shared with parents using an online app. Observations did not yet consistently hold enough information to fully support all children in identifying their interests and learning needs. Next steps were not yet consistently logged to progress children's learning. We discussed this with management who advised this was part of ongoing improvements.

Staff interactions were calm and patient. They enthusiastically participated in children's games, encouraging children to take turns and problem solve. Staff provided praise and encouragement. However, children would benefit from more open-ended questions to extend children's thinking and support their curiosities and problem solving skills.

Older children independently chose where they played and moved confidently between the indoor and outdoor play spaces. Children had opportunities for risky play outdoors and made good use of the outdoor rope ladder and swings. These experiences allowed children to challenge themselves physically, build confidence and develop coordination and gross motor skills in a safe and supervised environment.

Children's communication and literacy was supported through discussions with staff, spontaneous singing, storytelling and opportunities for mark making. During the inspection, children enjoyed a visit from a local music group. QR codes were displayed on the wall with stories which children enjoyed listening to. The use of some environmental print, such as packaging and signs, provided opportunities for children to recognise and become familiar with letters. Some mathematical language was used as children and staff named colours and counted.

Staff recognised the value of community connections and used them well to enrich children's experiences. Meaningful links within the local community had been established and included visits to a care home, food pantry, library, local parks and shops. These enhanced children's play and learning experiences and promoted a sense of belonging within their local environment.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good. We identified several strengths which impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children were cared for in an environment that was welcoming, well-furnished and maintained with plenty of ventilation and natural light. Children's artwork was attractively displayed, supporting them to feel valued and respected. A parent described the setting as: "A clean space with plenty of activities and toys to learn from."

Overall, the indoor and outdoor play areas were inviting and well-considered. These included sensory play, construction, role play and quieter areas. Children enjoyed choosing from a variety of developmentally appropriate, good quality resources. There were some open-ended, real life and natural objects which offered challenge and promoted children's curiosity and imagination.

Cosy spaces were available across the setting which supported children's wellbeing. Comfortable seating, cushions, rugs, greenery and lamps created homely areas where children could play or rest during a busy nursery day.

Children's safety was supported as staff ensured doors to the setting were secured when children were arriving or leaving the setting with parents. Staff worked together to ensure children were accounted for throughout the day. Children were encouraged to assess day-to-day risks. One child told us their friend was, "Outside checking if the garden is safe". Another child commented, "We have to check the gate is locked and there's no glass". The service had introduced wellbeing teddy bears to include and assist children with risk assessing areas. As a result, children were learning important life skills as they developed an understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

Children experienced an environment that was clean which helped support their wellbeing. Although staff did encourage children to wash their hands regularly and at key times, such as before eating, this was not always effectively supervised or supported. Although baby wipes were used, children did not wash their hands after eating, in line with guidance. These measures did not keep children safe from the potential spread of infection. We discussed this with management and immediate action was taken. To ensure consistency, the manager should undertake some quality assurance to embed best practice.

Children's personal information was stored securely in a lockable cabinet and any digital information was password sensitive. This ensured families' privacy and confidentiality.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good. We identified several strengths which impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The vision, values and aims of the service had recently been reviewed and shared with children and families. These included 'for nursery to be a safe and homely environment for all service users'. This supported everyone to know what was important for the service to meet the needs of children.

The service recognised the importance of parental involvement. Parental views were sought using questionnaires and daily opportunities at drop off and pick up for parents to come into the setting. Upcoming stay and play sessions were planned. Staff told us this was an ongoing area for development to further support partnership working. A parent commented: "We are always asked about our opinions; well aware that if there were any issues it's not a slight problem to raise them."

Positive experiences for children were supported by a realistic, relevant and achievable improvement plan. Areas included wellbeing, community engagement and the environment. An improvement floorbook was in the early stages of development and provided a visual and assessable way of showing the improvements that had been made. A positive ethos helped to ensure that staff were working towards the same goals and progress was seen to be contributing to improved experiences for children.

Staff were guided and supported by a motivated and passionate management team who were committed to provide a high quality service for children and families. Staff told us they felt "well-supported" by the leadership team. One staff member commented, "We are like a family". Regular team meetings provided opportunities for staff to reflect on children's individual needs, share learning and discuss planning and developments within the service. To further evaluate performance, the manager and staff should continue to familiarise themselves with A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school-aged childcare. To support continued improvement within the service and positive outcomes for children.

Management had a quality assurance calendar in place which helped them take steps to monitor the quality of care, play and learning. We discussed where it would be beneficial to include further monitoring across the service. For example, reviewing personal plans to help improve consistency and ensure plans reflect children's current needs, wishes and choices. Informal monitoring of staff practice was taking place by the management team. This was a positive start in supporting continual staff development that promotes positive outcomes for children. We suggested formalising this process to enable management to easily identify any training needs.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good. We identified several strengths which impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children were supported by a caring and motivated staff team. An induction programme supported new staff at a pace that was right for them. This included being mentored by a designated member of staff and the wider team who shared their skills and knowledge. Staff spoke positively about team building and building relationships. A mix of staff skills and experience helped to ensure children's experiences across the day were positive.

Staff communicated well, sharing information to support the needs of children or when tasks took them away from their areas of responsibility. They were respectful to each other through their interactions and worked well together. This created a positive environment that allowed children to feel safe and secure with adults who cared for them.

Staff had been safely recruited in line with the guidance Safer Recruitment Through Better Recruitment. All appropriate checks were carried out prior to staff starting in the service. This supported the safety and wellbeing of children.

Management recognised the importance of ensuring the service was appropriately staffed. When staff were absent, regular relief staff or staff from within the setting covered. Staff breaks were planned to minimise impact on the children whilst enabling staff to rest and be refreshed. This helped to ensure that children were safe and well-supported. Reflection on the staff deployment over the lunchtime period will support continuity and further opportunities for a social lunch experience.

Staff understood the benefits of training in furthering outcomes for children and were motivated and keen to further their development. Staff had completed core training including child protection which contributed to keeping children safe. A programme of champion roles for staff was being rolled out. This provided opportunities for the staff team to develop, reflect and improve outcomes for children. There had been good progress in developing free flow indoor and outdoor play experiences and community engagement, staff deployment was supporting this.

Parents told us they were happy with the care and support their children received. Parent comments included: "Friendly and responsive staff who clearly care about ensuring children in their care are looked after", "I love this nursery, they get to know the children so well and my child has come on leaps and bounds since attending", "The manager told me their vision was to make the nursery a home away from home and that's exactly what it is. My child is always excited to go to nursery and it's great reassurance as a parent."

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the service was registered. Details of upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com

Detailed evaluations

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| 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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