# Dunblane Primary School Nursery
## Day Care of Children

Doune Road
Dunblane
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Telephone: 01786 822 351

**Type of inspection:**
Unannounced

**Completed on:**
17 September 2025

**Service provided by:**
Stirling Council

**Service provider number:**
SP2003002689

**Service no:**
CS2003015598

## About the service

Dunblane Primary School Nursery provides a daycare of children service in the Dunblane area of Stirling. The nursery is a purpose-built building situated next to the primary school. The nursery has access to their own enclosed outdoor space. The nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 32 children at any one time; aged between two years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is based in a residential area of Dunblane and is close to local shops, woodland areas, parks and other amenities. Children are cared for in a large playroom with access to a large outdoor space with direct access from the playroom, separate toilet facilities and an area to prepare their snacks and have their meals.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection carried out by two inspectors, which took place on Tuesday 16 September 2025 between 09:15 and 16:00. 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.

To inform our evaluations we:

- spoke with children using the service
- received feedback from five families
- 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

Key Messages:

• Staff were empathetic and attuned, supporting children to feel valued, loved and included.
• Positive relationships had been developed between staff, children, families and other professionals.
• Children were supported to develop their own understanding of risk, enhancing confidence and physical skills.
• Children were cared for in a bright, comfortable and welcoming setting with high-quality furnishings and displays that celebrated their work and voice.
• Children benefitted from a staff team with a mix of knowledge, skills and experience.
• Staff interactions were consistently kind, nurturing and respectful.
• Staff knew children and families well. Individualised support was offered and this helped to maintain open and trusting relationships.

## 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 kind, caring and nurturing interactions from all staff. They carefully considered their placement when engaging with children, for example getting down to children's level when taking part in play and conversations. Children's care was provided in a sensitive and compassionate way. The empathetic and attuned interactions from staff supported children to be included throughout the service. As a result, children felt valued and loved.

Children's needs were met by staff who were seen to be responsive to them through respectful interactions. Staff knew children well and understood when to offer appropriate support. For example, staff offered cuddles and comfort, different resources or allowed children extended time to process routines. Children were seen to be happy, comfortable and confident exploring their play environments. This highlighted that positive attachments had been formed between children and the staff providing their care, play and learning experiences.

Children had personal plans in place that supported the staff to understand children's differing needs. These were reviewed in line with current legislation in partnership with families. Management had identified that these processes could be streamlined and had made developing plans one of the improvement priorities for the service. This would ensure information gathered would continue to be meaningful, clear and relevant to meet children's needs.

Children's care, play and learning opportunities were enhanced through strong links with other professionals. Staff worked in partnership with key agencies which ensured all children received skilled interventions and consistent strategies to meet their needs. This meant that all children were supported to achieve in a way that was right for them.

Children experienced sociable and unhurried mealtimes, which provided children with opportunities to build on their independence skills. Children helped to set up spaces, self-serve some of their food choices and chose where to eat, either indoors or outdoors. A rolling snack model allowed children choice in when to have their meal. This minimised the interruptions to their play. There were periods over lunch when staff could not consistently sit alongside children. While staff remained close by to provide effective supervision and keep children safe, social aspects of mealtimes would be enhanced if staff could consistently sit with children. It would be beneficial for the service to consider how this could be developed further. Management agreed and shared that they were monitoring these experiences and routines for all children.

Children and their families were kept safe by a knowledgeable staff team who were confident in safeguarding procedures. Staff undertook annual child protection training and took part in regular professional discussions. Although there were policies in place, we discussed how they could be developed further, for example the use of a flow chart with step-by-step procedures. This would help staff to manage concerns and continue to ensure effective support is provided for children's wellbeing and overall welfare.

**Quality indicator 1.3 Play and Learning**

Children were seen to be having fun and fully engaged in their play experiences. They had access to a variety of resources that were developmentally appropriate and provided children with opportunities to problem solve. For example, loose parts were woven throughout the play spaces and children were seen to be using these to extend their play ideas further. A staff member told us, "I use my creativity and imagination when resourcing play experiences". Staff used skilled interactions to extend children's learning and ideas further through open ended questions and discussions. As a result, children were engaged in their play and learning for extended periods of time.

Language, literacy and numeracy opportunities were provided to children throughout their learning environments. Children were seen to be using books as a point of reference when completing their creations in the art area and other children were working together to complete puzzles. These opportunities could be developed further in the outdoor environment. For example, the use of environmental print would provide children with meaningful literacy and numeracy opportunities while they played. A lending library and adventure sacks provided children with an opportunity to share their experiences with their families.

Planning approaches were child centred and responsive to their interests. A balance of planned and spontaneous experiences was carefully considered. Extended blocks of learning were provided for children, such as forest kindergarten and digital leadership. This meant that children's planned experiences allowed them time to embed their learning and were meaningful. Staff came together regularly to discuss children's interests and where support might be required. This ensured children were supported to progress and achieve. Floor books were used well to capture children's voice and celebrate their learning. This allowed children to revisit their experiences and share them with others.

Children had opportunities to explore their local community and develop intergenerational links. Trips to local parks and visits to monuments linked to children's current interests and helped to extend their learning. Further visits to the 'memory café' and children from the primary school took place. This meant that children were able to develop a sense of belonging and begin to build relationships with members of their wider community in a meaningful way.

## 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.

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

Children were cared for in a bright, comfortable and welcoming environment. Play areas were furnished to a high standard with ample space for children to extend their play ideas. A parent told us, "I feel the nursery is a very welcoming and relaxed environment." Children's artwork, creations and comments were displayed throughout the service. This gave children the message that they mattered.

Children benefitted from daily opportunities to explore the outside spaces with free flow access, which provided choice in where they played. A parent told us, "There are lots of opportunities to play outdoors, my child loves outdoor play". This ensured children had healthy options for play, fresh air and exploring large physical movements. Children were encouraged by staff to transport resources between learning environments to help them develop their interests and ideas. For example, children were experimenting with different resources to add to their bike to make them sound like motorbikes. This meant that children were empowered to be creative in different ways while they played.

Children were mostly kept safe while they explored their environments. Risks were assessed, documented and reviewed regularly. Daily risk assessments were used by staff before children entered areas. There were some areas within the outside space that required action. For example, removal of smaller plants such as nettles and placements of rubbish bags. The service were proactive and actioned areas highlighted straight away.

Children were encouraged to develop their understanding of risk while they played. For example, children were seen to be climbing over large apparatus, riding bikes around the garden and using tools such as rakes and spades. This helped children to begin to understand what they can achieve and have a sense of their abilities.

Health and wellbeing was also considered with the use of the Care Inspectorate's Keeping children safe - look, think, act campaign. A SIMOA (Safety, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act) teddy was used by children to help build their understanding of risk and safety. This was used effectively throughout the service. Children shared how SIMOA keeps them safe. One child told us, "you don't hit your friends" and another child shared, "you can just give SIMOA a hug too". This meant that children were developing an understanding of how to keep themselves safe both physically and emotionally.

Children were beginning to benefit from an outdoor space that was in the process of being developed. The most recent development was a large decking space that had been built. Children were involved in developing the space, with their voice and ideas listened to and actioned by staff. For example, children decided to use the decking area for small world resources, books and games rather than having the mud kitchen there. We would encourage the service to continue with the development of their outside environment to enhance children's experiences further.

## 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.

**Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well**

The service had vision, values and aims in place that had been developed within the past few years. Management shared plans for these to be reviewed again in consultations with families, children and staff within the service. Staff were heard to be using language relating to the values when interacting with children, such as "you are being responsible, thank you". This highlighted the values of the service was part of daily practice. We would encourage the service to continue with developing a shared vision. This would support shared aspirations for staff, children and families.
Children and families were meaningfully involved in the service. Regular communications took place, through emails, phone calls and daily discussions. Families were invited into the service daily. A parent told us, "everyday staff are welcoming and keep me well informed". Additional opportunities were arranged, for example, stay and play sessions. Families and children's achievements were celebrated within the service. This helped the whole family feel like they mattered and belonged within the service.

Quality assurance processes were effective and supported the improvement journey of the service. Actions were broken down into termly, monthly and weekly tasks which helped with the smooth running of the service.

An Improvement plan was in place that had priorities based on previous self-evaluation discussions with staff, children and families. Key actions were identified to help track how priorities were going to be achieved within manageable time scales. Staff were aware of the improvement journey of the service and shared they were actively involved. This meant that the service had embedded a culture of continuous improvement and were passionate about improving children's experiences.

Children were cared for by a staff team who were well supported by management. The National Induction resource was incorporated into induction plans for new staff. This was revisited by management and staff to ensure they were confident in their practice and help to identify areas for development.

## 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**

Children benefitted from a staff team who had a mix of knowledge skills and experience. Staff interactions were a key strength of the service. They were consistently kind, nurturing and respectful. They knew children and their families well, offering individualised support when needed. A parent told us "I feel I can talk to any of the staff about my child and they will know what their day has been like". Another parent shared, "They are very helpful and make my child's experiences more enjoyable". As a result, positive relationships had been formed and maintained with families.

Staff undertook regular training that linked to children's needs, improvement priorities and staff interests. Staff shared that they felt supported to access different types of training. Several staff were completing further qualifications and shared that their learning had impacted positively on their knowledge and practice. It would be beneficial for the team to carry out individual reflections once they had completed training. This will help staff to identify how training had impacted their practice and improved outcomes for children.

The service used consistent local authority supply staff to cover staff absences. This meant that supply staff who came to cover knew the service, children and their families. This ensured that children and their families experienced consistent care. Supply staff shared that they felt part of the team. A staff member told us, "our team is extremely supportive, understanding and considerate of one another. We work well together and provide help wherever it is needed". Another staff member shared, "All staff support each other and the culture of this is embedded". This meant that staff were not only confident in carrying out their key roles but were empowered to take on leadership roles.

Children were cared for by a staff team who communicated in a respectful way with each other. Clear communication meant that staff were aware of where team members were and what children were doing in each area. Staff monitored different areas throughout the day and deployed themselves appropriately which helped to meet children's needs. For example, when more children were playing outside another staff member came out to support in that area. This contributed to strong working relationships and effective team working that supported them to deliver positive outcomes for children.

## 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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