

Insch School Nursery Day Care of Children

Alexander Street
Insch
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 June 2026

Service provided by:
Aberdeenshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000029

Service no:
CS2003015714

About the service

Insch School Nursery is a day care of children service. They are registered to provide care to a maximum of 60 children. The age range of the children will be from three years to those not yet attending primary school. There were between 19 and 27 children present during the inspection visits.

The nursery is part of Insch Primary School and is delivered from the school buildings in the centre of Insch. It is close to local amenities such as shops and woodland parks. Children are accommodated in two rooms. They have access to two cloakroom areas and a large enclosed outdoor play area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 22 June 2026 and 23 June 2026 between the hours of 8:30 and 16:15. This 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year. To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with children using the service and spoke to three of their parents/carers
- received five completed questionnaires from staff
- received eight completed questionnaires from parents/carers
- spoke with staff and the management team
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

- Children benefited from a well-led service where strong relationships, effective self-evaluation and meaningful involvement of families supported positive outcomes and continuous improvement.
- Children experienced high-quality play and learning supported by responsive staff, a well-balanced environment and effective use of observation and planning. This promoted confidence, curiosity and progression in their learning.
- Children experienced warm, nurturing care and felt safe, secure and valued within the setting.
- Strong partnerships with families and effective planning supported children's health, wellbeing and continuity of care.

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

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

Leadership 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

The service had a vision value and aims statement (VVA) which was displayed throughout the premises, in the nursery handbook and school website. Parents were involved in a recent review which resulted in the school aims being incorporated. The VVA were reflected in practice with staff treating and valuing children as individuals and working in partnership with parents. The statement was also evident in key documents, including the curriculum rationale, and in displays promoting children's rights. This supported shared high aspirations for children and families.

The manager and staff were available to parents when they brought children to the service or collected them. This supported positive relationships and effective communication, including opportunities for parents to share suggestions for service improvement. More formal methods, such as displays, surveys and mind maps, were also used. This helped the service understand and respond to the needs of children and their families. All parents agreed they and their children were meaningfully involved in developing the service. Displays showed feedback received and the changes made in response. This helped parents and children feel valued and listened to.

Quality assurance processes were in place to support high-quality experiences for children. These included monitoring practice, reviewing documentation and analysing data. They were effective in identifying areas for improvement. Findings were shared with parents. For example, the manager recently gathered information on the percentage of children achieving agreed targets and shared this through displays.

Children benefited from a well-managed pace of change. A detailed action plan, including timescales and review points, supported this. Best practice guidance informed self-evaluation, and staff described the positive impact of training on their work. Improvements were focused on enhancing children's experiences and outcomes, with ongoing evaluation ensuring these remained central.

Children's safety was promoted through safer recruitment practices, with staff appropriately registered with professional bodies. Recruitment was carried out centrally by the local authority, which limited opportunities for family involvement. However, steps were taken to introduce staff and ensure parents knew who was caring for their children.

Induction programmes supported staff to build confidence in their roles. There was a strong, supportive team, which staff identified as a key strength of the service. Regular team meetings and ongoing communication, including digital platforms, supported collaboration and the sharing of skills and experiences. The manager also signposted relevant training opportunities. Together, these approaches contributed to positive outcomes for children.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children were engaged and enjoying their time at the service. On arrival, staff were welcoming and had prepared experiences based on children's interests. This supported children to settle quickly and become involved in play.

Staff knew children well and demonstrated a strong understanding of how individual children were learning and developing. They were responsive to children's interests, skilfully supporting and extending play. For example, during play with musical tubes, staff introduced mathematical and musical language to enhance learning. Children were encouraged to explore, problem solve and follow their own interests, supporting curiosity and independence.

Children experienced a balance of adult-led and child-led play within a creative and stimulating environment. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of when to intervene to extend learning and when to allow children time and space. Opportunities to develop language, literacy and numeracy skills were embedded throughout the session, both in planned experiences and in spontaneous interactions.

Children had opportunities to deepen their learning through digital technology. This included programmable resources such as Bee-Bots, using tablets to research interests, and accessing real-life resources, such as telephones, during role play. These experiences supported children to apply their learning in meaningful ways.

Staff carefully observed how children played and used this to extend their thinking. Approaches such as Emotion Works supported children to develop self-regulation. As a result, children appeared confident, secure and increasingly able to manage their emotions. Children were supported to play and learn at their own pace. Staff promoted positive relationships by supporting children's interactions with one another.

Staff used their knowledge of children's development to plan appropriate experiences. Observations of children's learning and achievements were recorded and used to inform next steps. This helped ensure children's needs were met and their learning progressed.

Children were confident and highly motivated in their play. The balance of planned and responsive experiences ensured they were appropriately challenged and fully engaged. Staff listened to children's ideas and supported their interests, helping children feel valued and involved in their learning.

Children's learning was recorded using a digital platform, which parents could access. Parents were able to comment and share information about learning at home. This supported parents to be involved in children's learning and celebrate their successes.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children's wellbeing was promoted through nurturing relationships with staff and the manager. Children experienced consistent, warm and caring interactions, which supported them to express their emotions and needs. This helped children feel secure, valued and respected.

Children and families were well supported during transitions, including starting at the service and moving on to primary school or other settings. Flexible approaches, such as allowing parents to stay and offering additional visits, helped meet individual needs. Daily routines were also well supported. Children were reminded of the day's routine, and visual timetables were available. Displays showing which staff were present each day ensured children and families knew who was caring for them. The use of consistent relief staff further supported continuity of care and positive relationships.

Children's privacy and dignity were respected during personal care. Staff offered support sensitively and encouraged children to maintain their privacy. Children could choose to play with others or spend time alone. A quiet room was available for children who needed space when feeling upset, tired or overwhelmed. Support to recognise and name emotions further promoted children's emotional regulation and social skills.

Snack and lunchtime experiences were relaxed, sociable and unhurried. Staff sat with children, engaging in conversation and offering support where needed. Food appeared nutritious and safely prepared. Children were encouraged to develop independence by participating in snack planning and preparation and serving their own food and drinks. This supported the development of important life skills.

Children's health and wellbeing were supported through effective recording and planning. Personal plans were in place for each child and included important information such as medical needs, contact details and individual preferences. Plans also outlined strategies to support children; for example, with building relationships, managing emotions or separating from parents. Staff applied these strategies consistently in practice. Plans were regularly reviewed with families to ensure they remained up to date and responsive to children's needs.

Planning was informed by the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) framework. Wellbeing indicators were used to assess and support children's overall wellbeing. This provided a shared language for discussing children's strengths and needs with families and other professionals.

All parents who provided feedback said they had positive relationships with staff and were satisfied with the care provided. Being welcomed into the nursery supported relationship building and effective information sharing.

Families had regular opportunities to discuss their child's care and learning, both informally and through planned events such as meetings and stay-and-play sessions. The service had identified some barriers to

communication and had taken steps to address these. For example, mind maps were used to gather parents' views. Recognising the important role of families helped ensure children's care and support were consistent between home and the setting, leading to positive outcomes.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.scot.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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