Torphins School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Beltie Road
Torphins
Banchory
AB31 4JT

Telephone: 01339 267 730

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 January 2025

Service provided by:
Aberdeenshire Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000029

Service no:
CS2003015746

About the service

Torphins School Nursery is provided by Aberdeenshire Council. The service operates from within the primary school and is close to local amenities such as shops and parks. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 20 children at any one time aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school.

Torphins School Nursery operates from a portacabin within the primary school grounds. The premises consist of an entrance area and an open-plan playroom. Children also have direct access to toilets, nappy changing areas, and kitchen facilities. The service has free-flow access from the playroom to an enclosed outdoor area.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 22 January 2025 between the hours of 08:40 and 16:00 and 23 January 2025 between the hours of 08:30 and 13:30. 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 children during their play.
· Spoke with staff and management.
· Spoke with parents/carers during the visit.
· Received parent/carer online questionnaires.
· Received staff online questionnaires.
· Observed practice and daily experiences.
· Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were happy, confident and settled.
- Children were leaders of their own play and learning and could transport resources to meet their interests.
- The staff team worked well together to meet children's needs.
- Staff used their skills and knowledge to ensure high quality outcomes for children.
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- To ensure continued high-quality care and experiences for children, self-evaluation and quality assurance should continue to be a focus.

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 warm and nurturing care from staff. Children were very settled, relaxed, and confident. When children needed reassurance or support, we saw that staff were responsive to their needs. Positive attachments had been formed which supported children to feel safe and secure.

Staff knew children very well and were able to confidently discuss their interests, likes, dislikes, and support needs. Parents felt they had a strong connection with the staff. One parent said; "The teachers are all approachable and encourage the children to become independent." Another parent said; "Very friendly and welcoming. My child is always happy to go." This promoted a supportive ethos of children's needs being well met.

Personal plans were in place for all children. The format included the wellbeing indicators which helped the setting to gather meaningful information. This ensured children received care and support that was right for them. Support plans were in place for children who required one. These included clear strategies to support staff to tailor individualised care. Evaluating and reviewing these plans regularly with families ensured they contained relevant and the most up-to-date information.

Mealtimes had been an improvement focus for the service. These took place in a separate area of the building. Consideration had been given to creating a homely space with suitable furniture with table cloths on the table. Staff sat with children, helping to provide support and keep them safe as they ate. Friendships and positive social interactions were promoted through chatting together about the activities the children had enjoyed. Children ate food that was nutritious and supported their preferences and dietary needs. There were opportunities for children to develop independence through chopping and preparing fruit for snack, serving food and drinks and scraping their plates. Parents told us their children could choose from a range of healthy meals and snacks which reflected their individual, cultural, and dietary needs.

Medication was stored safely and securely out of the children's reach. It was however, very easily accessible to staff. Medication records sampled contained relevant information to support staff with safe administration. Records had been updated every three months to ensure the information provided was relevant and up-to-date. This contributed to keeping children safe and well.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children had fun and were fully engaged throughout the inspection. Staff were very responsive to children's interests and supported their choices with regard to where they wanted to play.

The pace of the day was very relaxed and unhurried which meant children had time to explore their interests and ideas. Children had opportunities to lead their play and we saw them problem solve, use their imagination and be creative. We saw the children in the mark making areas use paper, scissors, glue and a variety of mark making materials to create bracelets with patterns. Children were using the wide range of resources available to them very well and this supported their thinking skills and creativity.

Staff interactions were patient and encouraging. During discussions with children, staff adapted their language and pace, which supported children's understanding. Staff were skilled and knew when to step back and observe, and when to intervene with open-ended questions to support children's thinking and learning. For example, when playing with the magnetic shapes and children were following instructions carefully to create a castle. The staff member allowed time for this and extended the child's thinking through discussions about different kinds of triangles and what they looked like. This highlighted that learning was very meaningful and provided appropriate challenge for children.

Opportunities for literacy and numeracy were embedded within children's play and the environment. Children engaged very well with real resources such as plates, cups and old phones in the house corner. Adults sang and read stories with children spontaneously and in groups. Vocabulary and mathematical language were being supported through play. For example, when chopping fruit for snack the adult said "I'm chopping my sugar snap peas in half, look two equal parts". Children benefited from a variety of books and mark making materials available throughout the environment and used these to support their play and learning. This ensured there were lots of opportunities available for literacy and numeracy within experiences and play spaces.

Planning processes were effective. A planning board was shared with parents and supported staff contributions. Staff worked together to promote a balance of intentional and responsive learning experiences for the children. This was evident in the approach to learning during the inspection. Learning walls were used to evidence learning and highlight the child's voice. Staff took time to evaluate learning which ensured that children's strengths, needs and next steps were being well supported.

Learning journals were used to capture children's play and learning through observations. This approach provided an opportunity for families to see this in detail. The observations sampled identified learning. This supported staff to assess children's progress and achievements, supporting them to plan the next steps. The setting was successfully tracking children's progress, which allowed them to identify gaps in learning and tailor support and challenge.

Children benefited from very good connections with the school and wider community. Children had access to areas within the school including the playground. The setting had created links within the community for example, 'Bread of Life charity shop' in Torphins. Children had visited the shop that had supported the setting with funds for various improvements. This contributed to children's sense of belonging and supported them to have opportunities out with the setting.

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 experienced an environment that was very well furnished and well maintained with plenty of ventilation and natural light. Children's artwork and photographs were displayed, providing children with ownership of their setting as well as creating a sense of belonging. Resources were of a very good quality and included lots of loose parts and open ended, real resources to promote children's curiosity imagination and creativity. Soft furnishings, such as sofas, rugs, cushions, and blankets, provided cosy spaces for children to rest during their day at nursery.

The layout of indoor play spaces ensured that children could move around areas with ease, allowing them to access resources independently. Shelves and units at the appropriate height and labelled boxes contributed to this. Children were very confident while moving around these spaces and used resources very well to support their ideas and interests. They also had the freedom to transport and move around resources to extend their play and learning further.

Children had free-flow access to outdoors. They dressed appropriately for the very cold weather and spent time in the nursery's outdoor space. All parents told us their children's development was supported through interesting and fun play experiences and they had the opportunity to play outdoors. One parent said; "My child loves being outside playing in the little garden and the big playground." Another parent said; "The variety of different things they do to keep them entertained, from playing to reading to singing to baking to helping prepare snack etc." This contributed to their health and wellbeing, extended their play and learning, and gave children choice in where to play.

Systems were in place to help keep children safe. Robust risk assessments helped staff to mitigate risk and enhanced children's safety. Benefits were considered alongside these to support risky play and resilience. Children were being involved in developing their skills and awareness of staying safe through exploring the Care Inspectorate's SIMOA campaign using SIMOA the elephant around the setting. This supported the children's understanding of risk and keeping themselves safe.

Infection control measures were understood and implemented very effectively by staff. Robust hand washing routines were in place, with staff modelling good practice for children. Staff protected children by providing a clean and hygienic environment and personal protective equipment (PPE) was used at appropriate times, such as during food preparation. This contributed to keeping 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.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are led well

The setting regularly updated their vision, values and aims involving staff, children and families. This supported everyone to feel valued and included and ensured that these updated documents were meaningful, capturing the needs and wishes of those using and working in the setting.

Children's and families' views and suggestions about their care, play, and learning were valued by staff. The feedback we received from parents highlighted that they felt they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. Learning together opportunities were offered to share in activities such as book bug sessions, open evenings, termly newsletter. Information available to parents in the cloakroom supported families and included them in their child's experience. It also provided an opportunity to showcase the play and learning offered in the setting. Feedback from more formal questionnaires and informal feedback using 'post-its' for example, were positive and highlighted that parents felt their children were having good experiences, developing their independence and enjoyed attending the setting. Suggestions had been acted upon to ensure parents felt listened to, meaning there was a collaborative approach to improvement.

Staff told us they felt well supported by leaders in the service and were motivated to improve the service provided.

Staff said that their wellbeing needs and professional goals were recognised and supported by leaders through wellbeing meetings which they welcomed. This contributed to staff feeling supported and valued.

An improvement plan identified relevant and meaningful areas for development. These were shared with everyone and displayed within the setting. A self-evaluation floor book was used to document improvement planning and captured progress made. This system allowed the team to acknowledge their successes and help to measure the impact improvements have had. This supported the pace of change and ensured improvement was maintained.
The setting was using a quality assurance calendar to effectively support audits, procedures and monitoring within the nursery. These were evaluated and shared with staff to ensure everyone was clear and knew the outcome and the impact of these.

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

Staff demonstrated a real interest and warmth towards the children they cared for. Parents told us that, overall, they were very happy with the care and support their child received at the setting. One parent said; "[My child] has clicked with all staff and enjoys playing with all the other children." Another parent said; "My child is always excited to go to nursery, always comes out happy and talks positively about their time there." This supported children to feel very settled, happy and valued in the setting.

The leadership team recognised the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed at all times. Overall, the deployment of staff was very effective. They were flexible in their approach while communicating well with each other. Although staff had key areas of responsibility, they moved with children, where needed, to support the effective running of the service and meet the needs of children.

Staff were appropriately qualified. Some were working towards gaining further qualifications and had a very good knowledge of child development. Staff were able to discuss how they had identified individual areas for development and were supporting children with their social skills, confidence, and speech and language. One parent said; "- promoting independence - preparing [my child] for school - encourage [my child's] learning through play. Our child loves nursery and we have seen that over the past year [their] confidence has hugely grown." This contributed to children's development and learning.

Staff were very committed to their professional development ensuring they delivered a high-quality service and improved outcomes for children. Staff had undertaken a range of learning which included formal training, professional discussions, and self-directed reading. This supported staff to develop their knowledge and skills. As a result, children's care, play, and learning was informed by best practice and current research.

Staff inductions had supported good staff knowledge and awareness of their role and responsibilities. We directed the setting to the 'Early Learning and Childcare National Induction Resource' when reviewing their induction policy and procedures. This would further support staff to have a very good understanding of their roles, responsibilities, and effective ways of working.

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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