St. Margaret's R C Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Woodmill Road
Dunfermline
KY11 4BB

Telephone: 01383 602 435

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 September 2025

Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
SP2004005267

Service no:
CS2003015896

About the service

St. Margaret's R C Primary School Nursery is a daycare of children service provided by Fife council. The service is registered to provide a care to a maximum of 60 children from three years of age up to an age to attend primary school.

The service is located in Dunfermline on the same site as the primary school. The accommodation comprises of two playrooms that open onto a fully enclosed outdoor play area. Nursery children use other parts of the school premises including the dining area and the woodland area adjoining the school playground.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 2 September 2025 between 09:15 and 16:30 and 3 September 2025 between 09:15 and 15:00. 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, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed children using the service
- received feedback from nine families
- spoke with the staff and management team
- observed practice and daily life
- 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 genuine warmth, caring and nurturing approaches to support their wellbeing. Staff were compassionate and responsive in their interactions.
• Children were supported by motivated and enthusiastic staff who were committed to their role.
• Children were happy and engaged in their play and actively led their play and learning throughout the day.
• Children experienced a nursery that was welcoming and inviting for them and their families
• There was an ethos of continuous improvement across the setting, with self-evaluation embedded in daily practice
• Effective staff deployment across the service meant that the right number of staff were meeting children's individual needs, consistently throughout the day
• Toilet facilities were functional but showed signs of wear and tear. Some surfaces required attention to maintain hygiene standards and ensure a more pleasant experience for children.

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?	4 - 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 quality key question as very good.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children experienced genuine warmth, caring and nurturing approaches to support their wellbeing. We observed staff to be compassionate and responsive in their interactions. Children were supported to make choices as staff were attuned to their needs and what was important to them. This contributed to children feeling safe and secure and as a result children were confident, happy and engaged in their play experiences.

Children's wellbeing was effectively supported through personal planning which had been created in partnership with families. Staff knew all children well and were aware of their individual needs. They spoke knowledgeably about the children, describing their individual characteristics and any sensitivities they may have. This contributed positively to children's self-esteem and sense of wellbeing. This ensured positive outcomes for children and supported them to achieve their potential.

Children enjoyed mealtimes which were relaxed and unhurried, ensuring a positive sociable experience. All children were effectively supported to develop independence skills as they were able to self-serve their snack and pour their own drinks. At lunch time there were missed opportunities for some children to develop their independence skills such as self-serving. Staff recognised daily routines as an opportunity to promote close attachments with children using this opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations. This contributed to the nurturing, calm, sociable experience.

Children's personal care needs were met with kindness and respect. Warm interactions during nappy changing created a relaxed experience where positive attachments were formed. Children were encouraged to be independent which helped to increase their confidence and responsibility throughout daily experiences. We reviewed the procedures for storing administering medication and found that these were carried out appropriately, helping to ensure that children's needs were met in a safe manner.

Children and families were valued and respected. Parents were welcomed into the service to drop off and collect their children. This contributed to creating positive attachments between children and staff, and enabled opportunity for information to be shared between nursery and home.

1.3 Play and learning

The children were happy and engaged in their play and actively led their play and learning throughout the day. They independently chose where they played and moved confidently between the indoor and outdoor play spaces.

Children's language, literacy and numeracy was well supported across the nursery. Opportunities for emerging writing as well as exploring early numeracy concepts were available indoors and outdoors. This supported children to learn key skills through play experiences. Staff spent quality time with children, sharing stories and having meaningful conversations. This helped spark a love of reading and supported children in developing important talking and listening skills.

Staff used skilled interactions to support children's learning and development. We observed staff using a range of communication techniques to support children at different development stages. This included staff using open questions to extend play and learning as well as using single words, gestures and visual aids to engage and support other children. This supported children to feel valued and included within the nursery setting.

Staff were playful in their interactions with children and there was lots of chatter and laughter, they took time to listen to children and used effective questioning to promote children's curiosity and creativity. Staff knew the children's interests which meant they were able to make relevant changes to the environment to support children's play. This contributed to children feeling valued and respected within the setting. This supported children to be independent and confident in their play and learning.

Children had daily opportunities for free-flow access between indoor and outdoor areas which enabled them to make independent choices, direct their own play, and remain physically active. The outdoor environment was stimulating and well-resourced, offering a variety of experiences that extended learning and supported children's interests. Children were observed running, balancing, and engaging in activities that promoted the development of gross motor skills. These opportunities contributed positively to children's physical wellbeing, creativity, and overall enjoyment of their learning.

Planning processes were effective, recent changes to the format, had enabled the team to be more concise around planning for all aspects of the service. Staff worked together to promote a balance of intentional and responsive learning experiences for the children. As a result, children were offered rich, stimulating experiences which promoted curiosity, imagination, problem solving and collaborative play.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children experienced a nursery that was welcoming and inviting for them and their families. Play spaces were generally tidy and clutter free, with plenty of natural light for children to play, learn and relax. Children's artwork and photographs from home were displayed to ensure children felt valued and respected. Natural furnishings and resources provided a calming and nurturing environment for children to play and learn. This was a key strength in one of the playrooms which had a homely and nurturing atmosphere. Soft furnishings, warm lighting, and thoughtful layout contributed to a calm and inviting space that supported emotional wellbeing and engagement.

The outdoor area was well-kept and recently had a new perimeter fence installed to ensure children were safe. Staff had identified concerns with gaps, which had been reported and promptly fixed. As a result, children were safe whilst playing outdoors.

Children had access to resources that were clean, well-organised, which encouraged exploration, enquiry and fun. The continuous provision indoors and outdoors had been well considered to include age and stage appropriate resources, and interesting, open ended and natural resources.

Staff implemented infection, prevention and control routines to minimise the potential spread of infection. Children were encouraged to wash hands frequently and at appropriate times. Established routines meant children were supported to be healthy.

Toilet facilities were functional but showed signs of wear and tear. Fixtures and fittings were dated, and some surfaces required attention to maintain hygiene standards and ensure a more pleasant experience for children. Nappy changing area did not always ensure children experienced privacy during personal care routines. Upgrading these facilities would enhance the overall environment and better support children's comfort, privacy and wellbeing.

Accidents and incidents were recorded and shared with parents. Sampled accident and incident records did not contain sufficient information. For example, timing of calls to parents after a head knock or monitoring of head injuries. The service should ensure these records are recorded consistently to ensure that children continue to experience high-quality care and support.

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 quality key question as very good.

3.1 Quality assurance and improvements are led well

Children, families, and staff benefitted from a committed leadership team. They promoted high aspirations for children. This created a happy and welcoming ethos in the service promoting a positive atmosphere for children to play and learn. The positive ethos meant staff were proactive in taking a shared responsibility for change and improvement. As a result, children benefited from a staff team who were motivated and responsive to meeting their needs. Families told us; 'We are involved in projects together when nursery ask for additional input from children and their parents', and 'The nursery always take into account our thoughts and opinions'.

There was an ethos of continuous improvement across the setting, with self-evaluation embedded in daily practice. Staff demonstrated a collective responsibility for enhancing outcomes, and this shared commitment was evident in their reflective approach. The staff development floorbook clearly illustrated how team members thoughtfully considered the impact of implemented changes for children. Priorities for improvement were well-established and contributed to positive outcomes for children. Staff members told us, 'All staff are included, consulted and work together on evaluating and progressing the nursery improvement plan. Staff are continually striving to make improvements to the service which are discussed at team meetings' and 'Management are very approachable and willing to listen to our ideas and plans for future learning'.

Quality assurance processes were used effectively to review and monitor some aspects of the service in a focused and meaningful way. For example, audits of Personal Learning Journeys (PLJs), accompanied by constructive feedback to staff, directly contributed to very good outcomes for children by supporting reflective practice and continuous improvement. The service was responsive to suggestions made to ensure that monitoring across all areas of practice is consistently robust. This will support children to continue to experience high-quality care and support throughout the setting.

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 quality key question as very good.

4.3 Staff deployment

Children were supported by motivated and enthusiastic staff who were committed to their role. Staff worked well together to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for children to support the shared vision and a positive working ethos. Parents told us staff were friendly and welcoming. Their comments included, 'They are so open and friendly and professional. I trust their judgement and know my [child] loves them which makes a huge difference to me', and 'Staff could not be more friendly or approachable. I feel they really know my child and help them to grow and develop their interests. Staff always make time for any questions or conversations I would like to have; they are wonderful and give 100% to their job'.

Positive working relationships had been formed between staff which meant they were all meaningfully contributing to the inclusive and positive ethos of trust and respect. The staff team worked collaboratively and supported each other very well. Regular meetings and support from management engaged staff well in the process of reflecting on practice. As a result, the staff team were involved in the development of the service, which contributed to the shared aspirations of the team. This meant that staff felt valued and empowered to grow professionally and provided children with a happy, secure and supportive environment.

Effective staff deployment across the service meant that the right number of staff were meeting children's individual needs, consistently throughout the day. Staff were proactive in recognising any gaps and ensuring effective supervision and quality engagement with children. Staff placed themselves thoughtfully during busier times to ensure all children's individual needs were well considered. As a result, children benefitted from a very calm and positive experience. This contributed to children being respected and created a positive team ethos within the service.

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

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?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - 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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