

Newhill Primary School Nursery Day Care of Children

Blairgowrie Community Campus
Hamish Henderson Place
Blairgowrie
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Telephone: 01250 871 941

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 June 2026

Service provided by:
Perth & Kinross Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003370

Service no:
CS2003016073

About the service

Newhill Primary School Nursery is a registered daycare of children service. The service is delivered from Blairgowrie Community Campus, Blairgowrie. Children have access to an open plan playroom, snack and dining space, toilets, and an enclosed garden.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 122 children aged 2 years to those not yet attending primary school at any one time, of those 122 no more than 20 are aged 2 years to under 3 years.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 22 and Tuesday 23 June 2026, between 08:00 and 16:45. Three inspectors carried out the inspection 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:

- spoke with children;
- reviewed survey responses from 21 parents and eight staff;
- spoke directly to a number of parents;
- spoke with management and staff;
- observed practice and children's experiences; and
- 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, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvement is necessary within Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources.

Key messages

- Warm, encouraging and respectful interactions supported children to experience nurturing care. Staff knew children well and responded sensitively to their needs, helping them feel secure, valued and confident.
- Skilled staff interactions extended children's thinking and supported positive outcomes across communication, literacy, numeracy and wellbeing.
- Effective personal planning and partnerships with families helped ensure children's individual needs were understood and supported.
- A requirement has been made to strengthen leadership oversight, quality assurance and risk management arrangements. This is to ensure children's safety and wellbeing are consistently supported.
- Children were engaged within their play and learning through meaningful experiences that reflected their interests, choices and stages of development.

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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
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 3 - Satisfactory / Adequate

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this quality indicator as satisfactory/adequate where strengths just outweighed the weaknesses.

The service had a clear vision, values and aims which had been reviewed and were reflected in daily practice. The vision, "planting roots to bear fruits", promoted children's development within a kind, caring and nurturing environment. Staff understood these values and described how they influenced their work with children. Leaders recognised the importance of involving families more fully in future reviews of the service's vision and values. This will help ensure the service continues to reflect the views, experiences and aspirations of children and their families.

Leaders had identified priorities for improvement. These included supporting children's social and emotional development and using staff feedback and developmental milestone information to inform improvement activity. Progress was monitored through review meetings and tracking records. Staff contributed to improvement planning and regularly discussed children's progress. This demonstrated how leaders used information about children's progress to inform improvement activity.

Families were consulted through a range of approaches. However, feedback about involvement in service improvement was mixed. Leaders should continue to strengthen participation to ensure the views of all families inform improvement and enhance outcomes for children.

Quality assurance processes provided oversight of key areas. However, they did not consistently identify concerns or demonstrate how improvement activity had informed practice. Monitoring of accidents, risky play, staff deployment and the use of nursery spaces required further development. Strengthening quality assurance arrangements will help leaders identify concerns earlier, improve practice and support safer, more positive outcomes for children.

Management were visible within play and learning spaces and provided support to staff. Staff valued the open culture and told us leaders listened to their views and created a safe space to raise concerns. Staff wellbeing was reflected within quality improvement planning. However, observations, staff feedback and parent feedback highlighted concerns about staffing capacity.

Staff described increasing complexity of children's needs and challenges in consistently providing the standard of care they aspired to achieve. Some parents also felt additional staffing would help ensure all children's needs were met. Leaders should review staffing deployment and work with the local authority to ensure children's changing levels of need are regularly considered.

Management generally understood notification requirements. However, during inspection we identified that a significant event had not been reported in line with registration requirements. Leaders responded promptly and submitted the required notification. While management showed a commitment to improvement, systems for identifying, assessing and reporting significant events were not consistently effective. A requirement has been made to strengthen quality assurance, risk management and staffing oversight to ensure risks are identified and managed effectively and children's safety and wellbeing are protected (**see requirement 1**).

Requirements

1. By 30 October 2026, the provider must ensure effective systems are in place to identify, assess, monitor and reduce risks to children's health, safety and wellbeing. To do this, the provider must, at a minimum ensure:

- a) risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated, particularly for risky play experiences, and are used to inform practice and support children's safety;
- b) accident and incident records include an evaluation of the event, actions taken, and how this learning has informed practice and reduced the risk of recurrence;
- c) staffing levels and staff deployment are regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure they meet children's needs and support their safety and wellbeing; and
- d) audits and quality assurance activities are undertaken systematically to identify areas for improvement and demonstrate how these have informed practice and improved outcomes for children.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 4 (1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI/2011/210)

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes.' (HSCS 4.19);

'My environment is secure and safe.' (HSCS 5.17); and

'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed.' (HSCS 4.23).

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator: Play 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 experienced rich play and learning opportunities which reflected their interests, promoted curiosity and supported their development across key areas of learning. Children were highly engaged in their play and learning. Spaces were well organised and included a wide range of attractive resources which encouraged children to lead their own experiences.

Children confidently accessed construction materials, loose parts and creative resources to explore ideas and work alongside others. We observed children building detailed models together, sharing ideas and solving problems through play.

Children experienced a range of outdoor learning opportunities which encouraged exploration, imagination and active learning. Children engaged enthusiastically in play using bikes, climbing equipment and loose parts resources. Opportunities including sand, mud kitchens, planting areas and small world play supported creativity, investigation and enjoyment.

Learning opportunities effectively supported children's developing literacy and numeracy skills. Staff built on children's interests to create relevant and engaging experiences. For example, children linked their interests in flags, countries and football to writing, mark-making and recognising letters and numbers. Staff provided encouragement and appropriate challenge which helped children develop confidence in their early literacy skills. As a result, children experienced learning which was enjoyable, purposeful and meaningful to them.

Communication tools, including signs, symbols and sign language, supported children to express their ideas and participate fully in experiences. Children engaged in learning which supported their communication, physical development and wellbeing.

Children benefited from warm, positive interactions which promoted learning and development. Staff recognised children's cues and interests and adapted their approach to sustain engagement. Open-ended questions encouraged children to explore, predict and share their ideas. Praise and encouragement were embedded in daily practice and helped children feel valued and successful. During sensory play, staff followed children's lead and modelled exploration, resulting in children demonstrating enjoyment, sustained concentration and curiosity. As a result, children developed confidence, resilience and positive attitudes towards learning.

Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of how to promote children's learning and development. Champion roles were embedded effectively and had a positive impact on children's experiences. The communication champion promoted language development through approaches such as the "book of the week", words of the week and Makaton signs, which were shared with families. This strengthened continuity between home and nursery. Forest school approaches enhanced outdoor learning and encouraged children to develop confidence, resilience and independence. Children also benefited from the Play on Pedals programme, which supported balance, coordination and physical confidence. As a result, children experienced a broad curriculum which supported learning across a range of experiences.

Staff regularly reviewed children's progress and used tracking information to identify where support was needed. Greater consistency in recording and tracking children's next steps would further strengthen evidence of children's progress and help inform future learning. Overall, children experienced well-planned and responsive learning which supported their progress, engagement and achievement over time.

Parents spoke positively about the support provided by staff. One parent told us, "Key worker (or any member of staff) are friendly and approachable. The team are great at providing support and guidance." Another parent described the service as having a "gentle approach to learning" where children were encouraged, but not forced, to participate. Children's feedback was equally positive. They told us they enjoyed playing with their friends, spending time in the construction area and listening to stories read by staff. These positive relationships contributed to children's enjoyment, confidence and sense of belonging.

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 experienced warm, nurturing care from staff who knew them well. Staff practice was a significant strength of the service. Interactions were consistently kind, respectful and caring. Staff provided positive role models and supported children to develop friendships, build relationships and feel included. Children were encouraged to make choices throughout the day and confidently decide how they wished to play and learn. We observed staff and children singing together, playing alongside one another and sharing responsibility. This helped children to feel happy, secure and confident.

Transitions throughout the day were well planned and helped children feel settled and reassured. Daily routines were familiar and predictable, supporting children to understand expectations and move confidently between experiences. A soft start to the day promoted calm arrivals and helped positive relationships with families. Older children transitioned smoothly to the dining hall, where staff had prepared the environment in advance and supported children to move between spaces in an organised manner. As a result, children experienced a calm and consistent day which supported their wellbeing, engagement and independence.

Mealtimes were relaxed, social and contributed positively to children's wellbeing. Healthy and nutritious meals and snacks were provided within a welcoming dining environment. Homely touches, appropriate crockery and child-sized furniture helped create a positive dining experience. Staff sat with children, encouraging conversation and supporting language development. Children were encouraged to take responsibility for aspects of mealtime routines, including clearing plates and making choices. This supported children to develop independence, social skills and confidence within daily routines.

Personal care was managed sensitively and promoted children's comfort and dignity. During nappy changing routines, staff sought children's consent, explained what was happening and provided reassurance throughout. Children were encouraged to undertake tasks for themselves, such as removing shoes, managing clothing and dressing independently, with staff offering support when needed. Privacy and dignity were respected and infection prevention and control procedures were generally followed. We discussed the need for greater consistency in some hygiene practices, including nappy storage, flushing of toilets and disposal of used towels. Strengthening these arrangements would further support a clean, safe and nurturing environment for children.

Children's safety and wellbeing were actively promoted. Staff and children had engaged positively with the Care Inspectorate SIMOA campaign, helping children develop an age-appropriate understanding of safety. We discussed strengthening approaches to monitoring children through regular and accurate headcounts. This would provide greater assurance of children's whereabouts throughout the day and support their safety and wellbeing.

Personal planning effectively supported children's individual needs and wellbeing. Personal plans were in place for all children and detailed information helped staff understand routines, preferences and support strategies. Records relating to additional support needs included clear strategies and information from child planning meetings. Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of children's needs, and we observed them using individual strategies effectively throughout the inspection. While recording of dates and signatures within some personal plans required greater consistency, we were satisfied that plans had been regularly reviewed. As a result, children experienced care and support which reflected their individual needs and promoted 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	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
Leadership and management of staff and resources	3 - Satisfactory / Adequate
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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