Denbeath Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Wall Street
Buckhaven
Leven
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Telephone: 01592 583 422

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 March 2025

Service provided by:
Fife Council

Service provider number:
SP2004005267

Service no:
CS2003017090

About the service

Denbeath Primary School Nursery is located in a residential area of Buckhaven, Fife. The nursery is registered to care for 24 children at any one time and offers full day funded sessions from 09:00 till 15:00. There are parks, shops and other amenities close by.

Children are cared for in a designated playroom in the school building which has direct access to its own outdoor play space. Toilets and nappy changing are directly accessible from the play room and there is also a kitchen area with handwashing facilities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 27 March 2025 between 10:15 and 15:45 hours. We returned to complete the inspection and give feedback on 28 March 2025. 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 15 children using the service
- spoke with and gathered feedback from six family members/representatives
- spoke with all staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

Key messages

- Children benefitted from consistently nurturing and warm interactions from staff, ensuring they felt safe and secure.
- Mealtimes were sociable, relaxed and unhurried, enabling children and staff to build relationships with each other and positive relationships with food.
- Community links were enriching children's experiences.
- Consistency across the leadership and staffing, along with robust quality assurance has supported significant improvements made contributing to children's positive outcomes.
- The nursery playroom and toilets had been refurbished, contributing to an improved and inviting space which minimised children's risk of cross infection.

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1; Nurturing care and support.

Staff interactions were consistently calm, loving and supportive, promoting children's sense of security. Staff were attentive to children and provided cuddles and reassurance when needed. This built children's trust in adults, helped them build secure attachments and contributed to them feeling comfortable in the setting.

Restorative and calm approaches were used in response to any unwanted behaviour, which promoted children's understanding of their actions on others. The consistent use of the 'fix it folder' enhanced this and empowered the children to resolve disputes. One child told us about why she had been upset and how they were "now ok", after using the folder. This meant children were learning to take ownership of their actions.

Relaxed, sociable mealtimes with lovely conversations made children feel included and valued. Accessible water bottles supported children's hydration. Snacks and lunches provided by the setting were nutritious and balanced and children were independent in self-serving and preparing snacks. We discussed how the service could use the updated 'Setting the Table' guidance to promote healthier packed lunches. All meals were served in the playroom maintaining children's familiarity and comfort during lunch time. The service should continue with their own identified actions for the lunch time experience regarding self-serving opportunities and proximity of the eating area to the open door.

Staff were accessible to parents during collection which supported information sharing to meet children's needs. Family engagement sessions and six-monthly review meetings also provided additional opportunities to discuss children's play and learning. One parent highlighted not having had this opportunity which we shared with management.

Children's health, safety and wellbeing were supported through the procedures in place for managing medication and accidents. This ensured children received timely and consistent treatment. We suggested putting a system in place to record all medication held along with expiry dates and action taken, to further improve this.

Children with additional support needs benefitted from robust and responsive support plans which were regularly reviewed along with effective collaboration with other professionals. Children experienced consistent support from staff who demonstrated a shared understanding of strategies in place and implemented these consistently. This contributed to children's success by meeting individual needs and supporting their development.

Quality indicator 1.3; Play and learning.

Children's self-confidence was boosted through the continued opportunities to be independent across the setting. Staff empowered children through their conversations, encouragement and praise which was consistent across all their activities. Children were encouraged to express their ideas and develop problem solving skills enabling their sense of achievement. Overall, children were viewed as capable which helped build their sense of responsibility and self-reliance.

The indoor and outdoor environments supported children's language, literacy and numeracy. Lots of singing, stories and games enabled children to explore number and letters in fun ways. For example, numbers on the chairs to help them with seating at lunch time and opportunities to make their own books. Children were learning to understand and use signs and symbols to help them communicate. They were able to tell and show us the 'sign' of the week and were supported in using other symbols around the room. This enabled them to express themselves.

Parental engagement opportunities such as scavenger hunts, home learning bags, stay and play, bookbug and 'peep' sessions increased children's positive outcomes. This involvement of family members further promoted children's language skills and mathematical understanding. Positive relationships with families had also led to improved resourcing. For example, flowers provided for the mud area and snack tables from a local florist and knitted mascots from a grandparent. These enhanced children's play and learning experiences.

Community links were established with regular visits to the library, beach and shops enabling children to develop a sense of belonging. A new link with a local community group was having a positive impact on extending children's learning through different experiences. For example, bringing in bees due to the current interest in minibeasts and doing a community litter pick. Plans to begin forest play soon, will further enhance children's outdoor learning and further opportunity for understanding risk in play. The intergenerational link with the local care home was a regular opportunity for children and residents to play and exercise together. This had been thoughtfully developed which enabled relationships to be established supporting children's emotional wellbeing, whilst creating joyful memories. These shared play and physical activity experiences were building children's respect and understanding of the elderly in a supportive environment.

Staff were responsive to children's interests and choices through planning approaches which were child centred. Consistent recording of children's learning and achievements evidenced their progress and learning outcomes. This was used to identify and support appropriate next steps enabling children to be successful. Children had real ownership of their journals and loved looking at and sharing these, which enabled them to further reflect on their own learning.

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 2.2; Children experience high quality facilities.

The attention to detail throughout the nursery created a beautiful environment for children's enjoyment. The presentation of resources and children's artwork demonstrated how valued children were.

The natural materials and layout provided children with a calm and secure environment, which promoted their emotional regulation and happiness. The range of open-ended materials inside and out enabled children's imaginative thinking, whilst displays and set up of resources invited their interaction. This helped to increase children's levels of engagement as some spent extended periods of time at activities.

There were cosy, quiet spaces available, which included direct access to a sensory room and a nurture nook. Cushions, mats and blankets enabled children to choose when to rest and relax or sleep. Blankets available provided comfort and were also supporting children's schematic play (repeatable patterns of behaviour). This enabled children to access regular rest, contributing to their happiness, focus and readiness for play.

Children were becoming responsible as they were encouraged to tidy up after themselves and help others. For example, children noticed and sought support from adults to encourage others to tidy and helped them. Another child was proud to show they had been on the 'kindness tree' twice for helping to tidy up. This and opportunities to conduct community litter picks were building children's respect for their immediate and wider environment.

Staff were vigilant about safety, with drawers and cupboards kept locked and staff's quick responses and communication, reducing children's access to unsuitable materials. A system of maintenance reporting was in place to support quick highlighting of any issues. Children participated in this by visiting the school office with staff to report identified issues. This supported children's continued safety and wellbeing.

Infection prevention and control measures were in place reducing children's risk of cross infection. Children and staff were observed washing their hands at key times which was carried out well, supporting children's health and wellbeing.

Indoor and outdoor environments were safe and secure and risk assessments were carried out to support children's safety and wellbeing. Children joined staff in undertaking risk assessments of the outdoor space with a dry wipe sheet available in the garden for daily use, allowing them to assess if the space was safe for play before being used. The SIMOA (safety, inspect, monitor, observe and act) approach was used well. Children took their 'SIMOA' the elephant toy on outings and positioned him at key points as a visual reminder of boundaries. This contributed to children having an awareness of risks and to supported their own and each other's safety.

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 3.1; Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

Improvements made as a result of the previous inspection were having a positive impact on children's outcomes. The full collaborative plan clearly outlined improvements and actions needed to address these. This was kept under regular review to measure and evidence progress.

Monitoring records, improvement planning, a quality assurance calendar and leadership meetings covered all aspects of provision and were being used well for assurance and improvement. These demonstrated that the headteacher and senior staff had a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the service. This allowed them to quickly address any identified aspects for improvement and celebrate successes.

Leadership capacity across the whole team was encouraged, supporting a whole team approach to improvement. An 'all leaders of learning' document identified specific staff responsibilities and staff were confident in discussing these. Best practice visits to other settings allowed staff to further reflect on how to make further improvements. We asked the service to now formalise these visits by planning the purpose of visit and completing evaluation along with any planned actions.

Minutes of meetings and discussions with staff demonstrated the whole team commitment to reflecting on practice and progression of planned actions. For example, setting up the 'you said/we did' board. This ensured that planned action was completed, improving outcomes for children.

The rich relationships between children and residents of the care home was evident through evaluations shared between both services. Care home evaluation comments from children included "I helped the man do it because he couldn't do it,", which had also been shared with the residents. Residents' comments had also been shared with children. Continuous review had identified further improvements with plans to invite residents into the nursery for a stay and play session. This continuous reflection on children's play and learning experiences enabled these to be developed at a pace that was right for children.

The improvement plan priorities were displayed for families along with the vision, values and aims. This enabled parents to see what the service were working towards. We asked the service to progress their own plans in making the progress towards these more visible to the parents.

Parents feedback on provision was gathered through use of a suggestions box and various questionnaires to parents. For example, a recent questionnaire regarding parental engagement opportunities. This meant parents could have some influence over improvements made. The service should continue to support parents to add their evaluations and comments to floor books and consider alternatives to the suggestions box.

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/people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 4.3; Staff deployment.

Staff monitored children's movement closely and communicated well to ensure all children were present at all times. They regularly took and recorded a head count, both indoors and outside throughout the day. Children were also involved in this which provided additional opportunity for numeracy.

Staff moved fluidly in response to where children were and needed them, ensuring they remained safe. Staff were vigilant and regularly checked on children, especially when they were in areas out of direct line of view such as the cloakroom space. They were mindful of children's need to feel hidden and were heard explaining to them "I'm just making sure you're safe."

Increased staffing in the middle of the day, along with the crossover of part time staff, helped to increase staff numbers at lunch time. This meant children continued to be closely supervised to reduce risks of choking and enabled their continued access to outdoors during this period.

Time off the floor for staff to complete tasks such as reviewing learning journals was managed well through use of a timetable. This meant that staff ratios were considered to ensure that children's needs continued to be met whilst balancing staff responsibilities.

There had been some change in staffing, and one parent told us "Staffing has been an issue this year with lots of different faces in the first term". These changes had been addressed and children were benefitting from an experienced and skilled staff team who had a range of skills and knowledge. Effective use was made of their different experience and skills to support children, families and each other. Staff spoke positively about how valued they felt by team members and management, and were complimentary of each other's skills. The staff team were motivated, enthusiastic and committed to learning. As a result, the service provided quality care, play and learning for children.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To keep children safe and healthy, the provider should ensure that the premises are fully safe and fit for purpose. This should include, but is not limited to children's toilets, nappy changing spaces and food preparation areas.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that "My environment is secure and safe" (HSCS 5.17).

This is to ensure staff skills and knowledge is consistent with the Scottish Government document, 'Space to Grow: Design guidance for early learning and childcare and out of school care settings.'

This area for improvement was made on 9 February 2024.

Action taken since then

A full refurbishment of toilets, nappy change and kitchen area had taken place. The nappy change area was now accessed directly from the playroom. This area for improvement is now met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To provide continuity and consistency of care, play and learning for children, the provider should facilitate professional discussions with staff, children and families about their shared vision, values and aims.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that "I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice" (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 27 February 2023.

Action taken since then
Vision, values and aims had been reviewed and the whole staff team were working together well with a shared purpose and direction. This area for improvement is now met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure there is sustained improvement of children's experiences, the provider should review the oversight and governance arrangements for the nursery. This should include, but is not limited to, providing appropriate leadership on a daily basis.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that "I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed" (HSCS 4.23).

This area for improvement was made on 27 February 2023.

Action taken since then
The lead officer maintained a robust overview of the service and worked effectively with the head teacher to maintain oversight and governance of the nursery through effective communication and leadership, which have led to improvements. This area for improvement is now met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To meet children's needs, rights and wishes, the provider should ensure staff are deployed so that they can provide individualised support for all children in a flexible way.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that "My care and support is consistent and stable because people work together well" (HSCS 3.19).

This area for improvement was made on 27 February 2023.

Action taken since then
Staff deployment throughout the inspection was appropriate, supporting children's movement and choice throughout the day. Staff worked responsively with each other in meeting the needs of individual children through appropriate communication and shared awareness. This area for improvement is now met.

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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