St. Madoes Primary School Nursery
Day Care of Children

Sidlaw Terrace
St. Madoes
Perth
PH2 7NH

Telephone: 01738 459 500

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 May 2026

Service provided by:
Perth & Kinross Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003370

Service no:
CS2003046719

About the service

St. Madoes Primary School Nursery provides a day care of children service in St. Madoes. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 20 children at any one time. The age of the children will be from three years to those not yet attending primary school. Two adults are to be on duty at any one time. The total number of children registered with the service at the time of the inspection was 17.

Children have access to a cosy indoor space with free flow access to a fully enclosed and secure garden, and a shared indoor and outdoor space within the primary school. The service is situated in a residential area, close to parks, public transport, and other amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 12 May 2026 between 09:00 and 17:00 and 13 May 2026 between 09:30 and 13:00. 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:

- spoke/spent time with 13 young people using the service
- spoke with 10 families and received nine completed questionnaires from families using the service
- spoke with four staff, the head teacher and principal teacher
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- 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

• Self-evaluation, quality assurance, and partnership working were robust and used effectively to drive continuous improvement and positive outcomes for children and families.

• Staff were empowered and confident in their roles, using reflective practice and ongoing evaluation to enhance experiences and outcomes.

• Children were highly engaged in high-quality play and learning experiences, demonstrating sustained focus as they explored their interests and ideas at their own pace.

• A well-embedded, skills-based approach to play and learning supported challenge, progression, and children's achievements.

• Children's inclusion and emotional wellbeing were strongly supported through nurturing, compassionate relationships with staff.

• Positive and trusting relationships with families were well established, with families actively involved in supporting children's learning and wellbeing.

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 demonstrated a clear, well-embedded vision, values and aims which were consistently reflected in practice. Core values, including 'I can' and a strong commitment to inclusion, creativity, achievement and nurturing care, underpinned daily interactions, and experiences. This created a positive, caring ethos where children and families felt respected, valued, and included. Feedback from families highlighted the strength of nurturing relationships and inclusive approaches, with families evidencing that their views directly influenced service development.

Robust quality assurance and self-evaluation processes were in place and effectively embedded. Regular monitoring of practice enabled staff to identify areas for improvement and take prompt action to maintain high standards. Where areas for development were identified during the inspection, these were addressed swiftly, demonstrating a responsive and proactive approach. The use of a wide range of evidence supported meaningful evaluation of practice and its impact on outcomes for children. As a result, children and families benefited from a service committed to continuous improvement.

Leadership used self-evaluation effectively to inform improvement planning and drive change. Staff, children, and families were actively involved in this process through inclusive and accessible approaches. For example, child-friendly and family versions of improvement plans supported meaningful participation. Children demonstrated an increasing understanding of their own learning and development, evidencing that their voices were valued and influenced change.

A strong culture of inclusion underpinned effective partnership working with families. A range of approaches enabled families to share their views, which were listened to and acted upon. Positive relationships were evident, and families reported feeling valued and involved in the life of the service. This collaborative approach supported ongoing improvement and strengthened outcomes for children.

The service actively contributed to wider improvement by sharing high-quality practice beyond its setting. Staff confidently led and shared developments, including approaches to floor books and observations of play, to support professional learning. This demonstrated an aspirational staff team committed to continuous development and improving experiences for children.

Leadership fostered a supportive and empowering environment for staff. Staff reported feeling confident to contribute ideas and initiate change. A strong culture of shared leadership was evident, with staff undertaking champion roles in areas such as emotional wellbeing, numeracy, literacy, and physical play. These roles enhanced staff confidence, supported professional growth, and contributed positively to children's experiences and outcomes.

Effective recruitment, induction, and appraisal processes were in place, supporting safe staffing and professional development. A values-based approach ensured staff were well aligned with the ethos of the service. Staff felt well supported by approachable leaders, with access to mentoring and regular opportunities to reflect on practice. This ensured a clear focus on continuous professional learning and improving outcomes for children's wellbeing.

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 highly engaged in rich, high-quality play experiences across both indoor and outdoor environments. They demonstrated curiosity, creativity and sustained involvement as they explored a wide range of opportunities designed to stimulate their interests and thinking. Staff skilfully supported learning through effective interactions, including open-ended questioning and wondering aloud. This promoted children's critical thinking and problem-solving skills. A consistent, skills-based approach to the language of learning was embedded across practice. This approach supported children to confidently apply and understand their developing skills within meaningful contexts.

Leadership roles had a positive impact on children's play and learning experiences. Recent developments to enhance access to mark-making resources outdoors supported children's literacy skills. This ensured continuity of learning across environments. Staff naturally embedded numeracy through songs and everyday interactions, while inclusive communication approaches ensured all children's voices were heard and valued. This supported children's wellbeing and enabled them to thrive.

Children benefited from stimulating, well-resourced play spaces where they were empowered to lead and direct their own learning. A parent commented, "My child loves nursery and is thriving in this environment." Staff regularly evaluated the environment and reflected on children's engagement, ensuring experiences were responsive and meaningful. Focused approaches to literacy, numeracy and emotional wellbeing supported children's holistic development. Initiatives such as 'learning in progress' supported children to take ownership of their play. A child told us, "It means no one can break my model when I'm still making it." This promoted confidence, pride, and respect for children's work.

Children confidently made choices and led their learning, exploring their interests deeply and meaningfully. Planned learning was seamlessly woven through play experiences, allowing children to develop and apply their skills naturally. One child painted a picture and told us, "It is a cocoon for a caterpillar. It's their home. It will turn into a beautiful butterfly." A calm, unhurried pace enabled children to become fully absorbed in their play, supporting the development of creativity, resilience, and problem-solving abilities.

Staff effectively used observations to inform next steps and were highly responsive to children's emerging interests. For example, an interest in the wind led to meaningful learning as children explored kite-making, with staff extending thinking through thoughtful questioning and support. This approach enabled children to practise and consolidate new skills in relevant and engaging ways.

Floor books effectively highlighted the learning journey of the service and demonstrated how children's interests shaped experiences and outcomes. Children were active participants in documenting and revisiting their learning, supporting depth and continuity. Staff reflections supported ongoing improvement and progression. Moving forward, the service could consider approaches to ensure that all children's communications are represented to promote inclusivity and recognise their contributions.

Partnerships with families supported children's learning and development effectively. Regular opportunities for discussion enabled a shared understanding of children's progress and next steps. Staff worked collaboratively with families to set meaningful learning goals, supporting continuity between home and the setting. A range of digital tools were used to record learning; however, streamlining these systems could further strengthen the holistic overview of each child's progress. This had already been identified by leadership as an area for ongoing improvement, demonstrating a commitment to continuous development.

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 high-quality care within a warm, nurturing, and safe environment where positive, trusting relationships were evident. Staff demonstrated a strong commitment to building meaningful connections with children and families, creating a culture of security, and belonging. A parent commented, "We are truly amazed with the staff in the nursery and feel very lucky that they support our child." As a result, children were confident, settled and their wellbeing needs were met.

Interactions between staff and children were kind, responsive and attuned to individual needs. A parent commented, "I feel the staff really bond with the children and care for them." Staff used a range of effective communication strategies, including Makaton, to support children's understanding and expression. Approaches such as Emotion Works were embedded effectively, enabling children to recognise and talk about their feelings. Staff used stories, puppets, and resources to support emotional literacy, helping children to identify strategies to regulate their emotions. This ensured children experienced consistent, compassionate care that promoted their wellbeing.

Mealtimes were calm, social, and mostly supported children's independence and choice. Flexible approaches allowed children to manage their own routines, while opportunities to serve food, clear away and participate in simple tasks supported the development of life skills. Staff engaged with children during mealtimes, promoting meaningful conversation and reflection. There was a shared understanding of how further consistency in approaches to independence could enhance children's skills, demonstrating reflective practice and a commitment to improvement.

Staff knew children very well and had developed strong, respectful relationships with them and their families. Children's plans were clear, relevant, and consistently implemented, ensuring individual needs were effectively met. A parent commented, "Staff are proactive and caring. They have a good understanding of the needs of my child." Collaborative working with external partners strengthened support for children and enhanced staff knowledge and confidence. This ensured a coordinated approach that positively impacted children's experiences and outcomes.

Transitions within the setting were managed sensitively and effectively, supporting children's emotional wellbeing. Clear communication between staff and children helped minimise disruption and maintain continuity of care. Families reported feeling well supported, particularly during transitions to primary school. This approach reflected individual needs and promoted consistency.

Staff demonstrated a strong commitment to keeping children safe. They used supportive language to help children understand and manage risk within their play. Approaches such as SIMOA (Safety, Inspect, Monitor, Observe, Act) were embedded effectively, with children actively involved in assessing and managing risks. This promoted children's confidence, responsibility, and ability to make safe choices within a secure environment.

Positive partnerships with families enhanced children's experiences and wellbeing. Families were warmly welcomed and provided with meaningful opportunities to engage in their child's learning through a range of sessions and activities. Staff prioritised building strong relationships with the wider family, supporting inclusion, health, and wellbeing. As a result, families felt valued, informed and actively involved in the life of the setting.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

Children's all about me care plans must be reviewed and updated every six months or sooner if required.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that 'My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices'. (HSCS 1.15).

It is also necessary in order to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011, (SSI 2011/210) Regulation 5 - Personal Plans.

This requirement was made on 6 November 2018.

Action taken on previous requirement

Children's 'All About Me' information was updated every six months and the service were proactive to ensure core information within registration forms was reviewed as part of their personal plan.

This requirement had been met.

Met - within timescales

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

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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