

Bright Horizons @ 24 St. Swithin Street Day Care of Children

24 St Swithin Street
Aberdeen
AB10 6XD

Telephone: 01224 531658

Type of inspection:
Announced

Completed on:
18 June 2026

Service provided by:
Bright Horizons Family Solutions Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2003000319

Service no:
CS2015343374

About the service

Bright Horizons @ 24 St Swithin Street operates from a converted residential property in the west end of Aberdeen.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 53 children; aged from 0 to an age to attend primary school full time; of whom no more than 18 are less than 2 years. At the time of inspection, 59 children were registered with the service.

Children are cared for over three floors, with access to enclosed gardens at the front and rear of the property. The service is close to bus routes, parks, green spaces and amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 17 June 2026 between 09:00 and 18:00 and 18 June 2026 between 08:00 and 15:15. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors 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:

- spent time with children using the service
- received six completed feedback questionnaires from families using the service and two from staff
- spoke with staff and the management team
- spoke with parents/carers of five children
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and children's experiences
- 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

- Children were cared for in a service with a culture of continuous improvement to support positive outcomes.
- Children's needs were met by safely recruited and well-deployed staff.
- Children enjoyed stimulating and interesting activities which promoted age-appropriate learning.
- Children and families experienced kind, nurturing relationships with staff.
- Staff knew children well and used information provided by parents to plan child centred approaches.

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: Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

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 benefitted from clear leadership and management arrangements which supported positive outcomes. Clear vision, values and aims were meaningful to the service and reflected the needs of children, families and staff. These were visible throughout the setting and had been reviewed with families and staff to ensure they remained relevant and understood.

A strong commitment to continuous improvement supported positive outcomes for children. Effective quality assurance and self-evaluation were embedded within practice and were used to identify strengths and areas for development. Staff, children and families were provided with opportunities to contribute to improvement planning through a range of formal and informal approaches. We observed that feedback from families had influenced developments within the service and most parents felt meaningfully involved. One parent confirmed this by sharing, "The nursery values feedback from families and keeps us informed about changes and improvements. Staff listen to our views and suggestions, making us feel that our opinions are respected and taken into account."

Since the previous inspection, significant work had been undertaken to improve children's learning experiences and strengthen staff practice. The manager demonstrated a good understanding of leading change and had been well supported by senior leadership within the organisation. Planned improvements were recorded in a plan, which was realistic, manageable and reviewed regularly. Staff described feeling involved in improvement work and understood how changes had positively impacted outcomes for children. This promoted sustainable and effective change which resulted in increased staff confidence, stronger practice and improved experiences for children.

Children were cared for by staff who had been recruited safely using robust processes. These followed current guidance, and all staff were registered with an appropriate professional body. New staff were supported to understand their roles and responsibilities through a comprehensive induction programme, promoting consistency of practice and positive outcomes across the setting.

Quality Indicator: Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

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 supported by staff who had a good understanding of child development, how children learn and how best to promote progress. Parents were happy with their children's experiences, reporting friendly, knowledgeable staff who, "have [children's] best interests at heart". Recent training and professional development opportunities had strengthened their knowledge of effective learning approaches and ways to extend learning through play. Staff used current guidance documents to inform practice, resulting in improved learning experiences that reflected children's development, interests and individual needs.

Staff were well supported through effective monitoring and supervision, which had helped identify where additional support was required and ensured staff received appropriate guidance to develop their skills and confidence. Opportunities for devolved leadership allowed staff to take responsibility for areas of interest and share skills and learning with colleagues. This approach had increased confidence, supported positive changes in practice and contributed to improved outcomes for children.

Management had a good understanding of staff strengths and used these effectively when deploying staff across the service. An appropriate mix of skills and experience was maintained, with experienced staff mentoring less experienced colleagues. Staff responded flexibly to children's needs while providing consistent care and support. Strong communication promoted effective teamwork and smooth transitions, resulting in consistently positive experiences for children.

A cohesive staff team supported continuity for children. Consistency was achieved through absences being covered by familiar relief staff and staff from other services within the organisation. Staff told us they felt well supported by managers and colleagues, and wellbeing initiatives contributed to a positive working environment. As a result, children benefitted from care provided by a skilled, confident and well-supported staff team.

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 engaged in high-quality play and learning opportunities. Across all areas, children were engaged, happy and actively involved in their play. A range of experiences reflected children's ages, stages of development and interests. For example, babies and infants explored flowers and playdough, being encouraged to explore, smell and describe them. Older children developed their curiosity by chopping fruit and vegetables, using the juices to make potions and soup. This helped promote appropriate levels of challenge and interest for children.

The environment had been thoughtfully developed to provide stimulating spaces for learning and parents spoke positively of the, "varied" and "engaging" activities available to their children. Provision was regularly refreshed to maintain children's interest and encourage exploration. Resources were beginning to reflect children's cultures and backgrounds through books, recipe cards and food items.

Outdoor spaces were well organised and adapted to meet the needs of different age groups, with opportunities for sensory play, literacy and creative experiences. Children also benefitted from links with the local community, including visits to a care home and participation in an annual litter-picking event.

Children benefitted from opportunities to develop literacy, language and numeracy skills, which were embedded throughout daily experiences. They enjoyed stories, songs and conversations, while staff used practical approaches to support mathematical understanding. For example, children in the pre-school room used natural materials such as, sticks to explore measurement. The recently introduced 'Wonders' approach had successfully increased children's engagement and curiosity. To build on this, the service was considering how these can be planned to support children attending part-time to more fully experience these planned learning experiences.

Interactions between staff and children were warm, responsive and nurturing. Staff were attentive to children's verbal and non-verbal communication, providing praise, encouragement and reassurance. They supported children to learn at their own pace and extended learning based on individual interests.

Children were at the centre of planning experiences and learning. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of child development and used observations effectively to identify next steps in learning. Planning reflected the differing developmental needs of babies, toddlers and pre-school children. Learning was shared via the 'Family' app with parents, who were encouraged to contribute with observations from home. They told us staff regularly shared information about their children's learning, keeping them informed through regular review meetings. These supported a shared understanding of children's progress and future learning goals. As a result, children experienced meaningful learning that promoted their overall development and wellbeing.

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 nurturing, responsive care from staff who were kind, attentive and respectful. Children demonstrated strong attachments by readily seeking comfort and reassurance from familiar adults. Staff responded sensitively when children were upset or tired, adapting their approach to meet individual needs. This resulted in happy, settled and confident children who felt safe, secure and well supported.

Children experienced supportive transitions throughout the day. They were welcomed on arrival and families benefitted from positive handovers at the beginning and end of the day. Children were familiar with routines and staff adapted effectively when plans changed. This minimised disruptions and supported consistently positive experiences for children.

Children benefitted from well established, effective routines. During personal care, privacy and dignity were respected, with staff asking children's permission and ensuring support was delivered discreetly. Mealtimes were calm and enjoyable. Although we identified some opportunities to strengthen staff engagement and social opportunities, children were well supported, with staff promoting independence. Staff demonstrated a strong awareness of allergies, dietary requirements and preferences, ensuring children received food safely. Nutritious meals and snacks were provided, and fresh drinking water was available throughout the day. These measures resulted in experiences which promoted children's welfare, involvement and independence.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported through the effective sharing of information. Staff used personal plans to record information provided by parents, who told us they felt involved and that staff respected their views. Plans were clear, accessible and updated regularly with current details of children's needs. Additional support and medical needs were well documented, with clear strategies in place. Effective systems also supported the safe storage and administration of medication. Overall, personal planning helped foster effective, child centred approaches to care and support, ensuring that children's individual needs were understood and consistently met.

Families experienced a welcoming service and described staff as friendly, approachable and supportive. Flexible settling-in arrangements, a comprehensive welcome pack and effective use of the 'Family' app promoted positive relationships and consistency between home and the setting. Most feedback from parents was positive, with families reporting that they felt informed and valued. This demonstrated positive relationships between staff, children and families which contributed to very good outcomes 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 ensure children experience consistently high-quality play, learning and development opportunities, the provider should at a minimum:

- a) ensure continuous provision that is available to children provides challenge and meets their learning needs
- b) ensure staff are skilled in extending children's play and learning
- c) ensure children can make choices about their day and lead their own learning
- d) ensure opportunities for literacy and numeracy are consistent within the continuous provision
- e) maximise the use of outdoor play opportunities for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standard (HSCS) which state that: 'I am supported to achieve my potential in my education and employment if this is right for me' (HSCS 1.27).

This area for improvement was made on 5 June 2025.

Action taken since then

Children experienced high-quality play and learning opportunities. Across all areas, children were engaged, happy and actively involved in their play. A range of experiences reflected children's ages, stages and interests.

The environment had been thoughtfully developed to provide stimulating spaces for learning. Continuous provision was regularly refreshed to maintain children's interest and encourage exploration. Children accessed outdoor play daily.

Children benefitted from opportunities to develop literacy, language and numeracy skills, which were embedded throughout daily experiences. They enjoyed stories, songs and conversations, while staff used practical approaches to support mathematical understanding.

Interactions between staff and children were warm, responsive and nurturing. Staff were attentive to children's verbal and non-verbal communication, providing praise, encouragement and reassurance. Planning approaches reflected the differing developmental needs of babies, toddlers and pre-school children and supported children to learn at their own pace.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the provider should ensure that there are sufficient numbers of staff available to ensure that staff with the right skills are in the right place at the right time to provide consistently high quality care for children throughout the day.

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

'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14); and

'My needs are met by the right number of people' (HSCS 3.15).

This area for improvement was made on 5 June 2025.

Action taken since then

Management had a good understanding of staff strengths and used these effectively when deploying staff across the service. An appropriate mix of skills and experience was maintained, with experienced staff mentoring less experienced colleagues. Staff responded flexibly to children's needs while providing consistent care and support. Strong communication promoted effective teamwork and smooth transitions, resulting in consistently positive experiences for children.

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	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	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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