Sgoil-àraich Inbhir Pheofharain
Day Care of Children

Day Care of Children Service (Gaelic Medium)
Tulloch Street
Dingwall
IV15 9QN

Telephone: 01349886602

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 January 2025

Service provided by:
Highland Council

Service provider number:
SP2003001693

Service no:
CS2024000120

About the service

Sgoil-araich Inbhir Pheofharain is located within a renovated community building in the Highland town of Dingwall. The nursery has a reception area as well an indoor playroom, dining and snack room, office, kitchen and toilet facilities. The playroom opens directly onto a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

Sgoil-araich Inbhir Pheofharain is registered to provide a day care of children's service to a maximum of 25 children from three years old to those not yet attending primary school. The nursery provides Gaelic Medium Education for all of the children attending.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 14 and 15 January 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 children using the service and three of their families;
- spoke with staff and management;
- reviewed online questionnaire feedback from six families;
- observed practice and daily life; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Staff supported the children's care and learning routines with kindness and compassion which contributed to the development of strong and trusting relationships.
- Children were offered good opportunities to be imaginative and creative in their explorative play and investigative learning.
- Staff effectively considered how to incorporate Gaelic language, literacy and numeracy into planned experiences.
- Opportunities to develop children's understanding of Gaelic culture and their play and learning were enhanced through strong connections to the local community.
- Children benefited from regular outdoor play experiences which supported them to be active and healthy.
- Children and families were valued and contributed to the development of the service.
- Robust quality assurance processes were supporting the ongoing development and improvement of the service.
- Effective staff deployment supported positive outcomes 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?	4 - 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? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff supported the children's care and learning routines with kindness and compassion which contributed to the development of strong and trusting relationships. Staff took time to listen to children, supporting them with sensitive interactions which nurtured their independence during play as well as during the day to day routines. Staff were very responsive to children's individual needs by offering reassurance, praise and physical comfort to children when needed. Some families commented: "Staff have a great bond with our child." and "They are warm, friendly, organised and open. They instil confidence and are very supportive and switched on to the needs of the kids." This promoted children's security and confidence and positive relationships with staff.

Children's overall wellbeing was promoted through effective personal planning. This was carried out in collaboration with families and partners to promote consistency and continuity in care. All families who responded to our survey strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: "I am fully involved in my child's care, including developing and reviewing their personal plan.". Personal planning information contained relevant information and strategies which were used by staff to support the development needs of children. Staff spoke confidently and knowledgeably about the care needs of children and implemented strategies to support them. As a result, all children received well-planned care and support to meet their individual needs

Children benefited from high quality snack and lunchtime experiences which promoted opportunities to develop their independence and skills for life. For example, children in the service poured their own drinks, collected their own crockery, served their own snack and meal accompaniments and cleared away their dishes. The snack and lunch area was welcoming with homely touches such as a tablecloth and flowers as well as visuals to promote healthy eating which the children had created. This helped to promote a relaxed and nurturing environment. At snack and lunchtimes, staff sat with children which provided opportunities to promote close attachments and develop their Gaelic language skills. As a result, children were nurtured and supported during their mealtime experiences.

Whilst no children attending the service required any medication, we reviewed procedures and paperwork in place. We were satisfied that safe management and administration of medication procedures were in place, to help ensure children's health needs could be met.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were engaged and having fun as they experimented and explored with a balance of planned and spontaneous play opportunities related to their interests. Children were offered good opportunities to be imaginative and creative in their explorative play and investigative learning. Play spaces were well resourced and promoted learning through real life experiences. For example, we observed children using the resources and materials available to support their interest in babies. Children commented as they discussed what they would need to look after them: "They need a wee hat." and "They need some milk and snow trousers". This supported children's engagement and enjoyment of learning.

Staff effectively considered how to incorporate Gaelic language, literacy and numeracy into planned experiences. Staff used stories and songs to promote children's understanding of Gaelic language in interesting and engaging contexts. They created natural opportunities to develop and consolidate Gaelic language during day to day routines and play experiences by adding words and repeating key phrases to describe and clarify what was happening for children. As a result, children were gaining confidence understanding and using simple Gaelic words. We observed some children using loose parts and open ended objects in the outdoor kitchen area to create 'a teacher's tea party'. Staff scaffolded learning at this time by modelling mathematical language to extend learning around measure and counting. This supported children to learn new concepts at a pace which was right for them.

Learning within the nursery was provided through both intentional and responsive planning approaches which followed the children's interests. Some of the children's words, pictures and ideas were captured within floor books which demonstrated their involvement in the planning process. However, the recording of key learning and meaningful next steps for children was not yet consistent across the planning information. The service had identified the need to further build staff confidence in observation, planning and assessment approaches to ensure children are sufficiently challenged at an appropriate level.

Families were meaningfully engaged in their child's play, learning and development. Staff ensured that parents were well informed of children's learning, progression and next steps, and were encouraged to give their feedback. Some families commented: "June & Sian are wonderful to my child and I have witnessed her communication in Gaidhlig improve and her confidence too." and " I have always had good ability to communicate with staff about her development".

Opportunities to develop children's understanding of Gaelic culture and their play and learning were enhanced through strong connections to the local community. Children had benefited from singing in the recent Gaelic Mod as well as performing songs at the local adult Gaelic classes. The service have links to play sessions with the local 'mathan bheaga' toddler group and are the venue for upcoming Gaelic café sessions which bring members of the local Gaelic community together for social experiences with the children. Children have also had regular opportunities to explore their community with regular walks in the local area, visits to the local shops in Dingwall and planting, growing and playing within the shared community garden space. As a result, children were enabled to develop an understanding of their community, sense of place and develop skills for life.

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.

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

The nursery playroom was clean, bright and comfortable with plenty of natural light and ventilation. This provided a welcoming environment for both children and families. Ensuring a healthy and safe environment for the children was a priority for the manager and staff. Infection prevention and control practices minimised the potential spread of infection. There were appropriate risk assessments in place which promoted the safety of the children as well as daily checks of the premises. Children were encouraged to think about their safety and assess risks. They took pride in leading the outdoor risk assessment using a simple checklist to help identify any hazards and ensure the outdoor area was safe for play.

Staff had created a well thought out, inviting and fun play space. The layout of the playroom and the storage of resources supported quality play and learning experiences. Children were able to independently select resources of their choice and lead their own play. We saw children who comfortably moved around the room and were engaged in their play. The home corner was busy with children taking part in imaginative play, while other children enjoyed taking part in arts and crafts activities, construction and water play. We discussed how staff could add more provocations to further support the development of children's literacy skills. For example including more books and mark making materials across the indoor playroom and outdoors.

Staff had a good understanding of the positive impact that outdoor play had on children's overall health and wellbeing. Children benefited from free-flow access to their own fully enclosed outdoor play area. The outdoor play space offered children access to a good range of rich and meaningful learning opportunities, including a digging area, sand pit, resources to mark make, balance and pedal bikes, areas to climb and slide and areas to plant and grow. As a result, children were engaged in an outdoor space which reflected their curiosities and interests.

Children's safety was well managed as staff were attentive and alert to children's movements. Tools such as updated registers and regular headcounts helped children to move safely around the setting and between the indoor and outdoor space. Children's security and safety was respected because of the measures in place.

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 key question as very good.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The vision, values and aims of the service were created last session with input from staff, children, families and the wider community. The vision of the service is to create a happy, safe and nurturing environment for children with a focus on developing Gaelic language and culture. This was reflected through the quality of experiences children benefited from and the commitment of the management and staff team to ensuring positive outcomes for children.

Children and families were meaningfully involved in the development of the service and regular communication took place. Children's voices were valued through the choices available within their play experiences and the opportunities they were given to take ownership and pride in their environment. For example, children had been given the opportunity to design the logo for the new nursery and were given day to day responsibilities such as preparing snack, organising resources and assessing risks.

All families who responded to our survey strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: 'My child and I are involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service'. Comments from families included: "We get asked for periodic feedback. We are also free to raise issues with staff direct, as well as at parents evenings." and "We are regularly invited in and feel welcome , we are told what they have been up to each day. The door is always open (metaphorically) if we need or wish to talk. It's a very supportive environment." Parents were welcomed into the service through stay and play sessions, induction visits and at drop off and pick up times. These opportunities allowed children to share their learning and environment regularly with their families.

The manager and staff demonstrated their commitment to the service and were motivated to make improvements to ensure they continued to support children to reach their full potential. There were quality assurance systems in place, including self-evaluation and an improvement plan, to ensure that the quality of the service was monitored and assessed in a focused and meaningful way. There was a quality assurance calendar in place that ensured purposeful audits of various aspects of the nursery were routinely carried out. Staff were given constructive feedback from monitoring visits. For example, changes were implemented to mealtime experiences offering children more opportunities to be independent and take responsibility for tasks. As a result, effective quality assurance processes were supporting positive outcomes for children.

Regular staff meetings and visits to nursery from the management team were supporting effective self-evaluation. The staff team worked well together, and staff welcomed feedback and suggestions for improvement. Staff were encouraged to reflect on practice throughout the year and had used best practice guidance to implement changes and review aspects of provision which had resulted in positive change. For example, improving the mealtime experiences for children and improving aspects of the learning environment. Staff had opportunities to look outwards and had taken part in learning visits to other services. This has resulted in improvements to profiling and gathering of quality observations of children's learning. This demonstrated the commitment of staff to the ongoing development of the service and improving outcomes for children.

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 key question as very good.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The staff were caring and nurturing and committed to providing a positive experience for all children. They were warm and friendly in their approach which promoted a happy and inclusive environment where children could play and have fun. Families commented: "The staff are very helpful and I trust them.", "Staff are friendly and approachable." and "They are always helpful and understanding.". This supported children and families to feel included, valued and respected.

The management team recognised and valued the importance of ensuring that the service was appropriately staffed at all times. Across the day, the staff team worked very well together to ensure effective supervision and quality engagement with children. For example, the staff team communicated well when a task took them away from a specific area or the needs of children changed. Staff deployment also took account of children's individual needs and strategies of support, providing additional support at times of transition for some children. As a result, children received the help they needed at the right times.

Staff worked well together as a team and brought a range of skills and experience to the service to meet children's needs. They told us of training they had attended, shared experiences of learning visits to other services and were knowledgeable around best practice guidance and documents. They told us how they used their experiences and knowledge in their practice to improve outcomes for children. For example, visits to neighbouring services had provided staff with ideas to develop the learning environment. As a result, changes were implemented and opportunities for children's play and learning were improved.

Arrangements for unplanned absence were supported by effective systems to ensure children's needs were met. For example, the service tried to use members of supply staff known to the children to ensure consistency in care and minimise disruption to children's routines. Clear personal plans and a folder of key information was available to all new and existing staff. This ensured that staff working in the service understood the needs of individual children and how to support them.

The management team had effective induction procedures in place to support new staff as well as a clear process in place for mentoring and supporting the existing team. Staff commented that they felt supported in their role and enjoyed working in the nursery. Termly support and supervision sessions were implemented in a collaborative way and were linked to the service areas for development as well as the personal development goals of staff. These reviews provided helpful guidance to staff which contributed to a supportive and inclusive ethos and ensured children's needs were 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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - 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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànain eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.