Abbey View Early Learning and Childcare Centre
Day Care of Children

Abbey View Campus
Hayshead Road
Arbroath
DD11 5FE

Telephone: 01241 464652

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
6 May 2026

Service provided by:
Angus Council

Service provider number:
SP2003000043

Service no:
CS2024000221

About the service

Abbey View Early Learning and Childcare Centre provides a daycare of children service to a maximum of 100 children at any one time aged three to not yet attending primary school. There were 68 children attending on the day of inspection. The outdoor space has been taken into account when agreeing the maximum number of children .Children must have access to the outdoor space at all times.
The service is provided by Angus Council in a residential community in Arbroath. It operates from a large play room within a school. The play room has direct access to outdoors, a sensory room and a quiet room.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between 05 May 2026 at 08:45 hours and 17:00. This 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:

- spoke with three young people using the service
- received 13 completed questionnaires from families using the service
- spoke with eight families during the inspection
- spoke with six staff and the Manager
- 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

- The service was committed to supporting children's individual needs and recognised and promoted each child as unique and individual.
- Mealtimes promoted children's independence and clearly valued and respected their choices.
- Staff demonstrated a high level of skill and commitment to ongoing professional learning, which clearly improved outcomes for children.
- Children confidently led their play and were supported to follow their own interests, promoting choice, creativity and engagement.
- The service valued outdoor play, giving children free access throughout the day, with regular forest visits supporting positive risk-taking and challenge.

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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	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

The service demonstrated a clear, inclusive, and embedded vision, values, and aims that strongly shaped practice across the setting. These placed children's wellbeing, inclusion, and equity at the centre. The service developed and reviewed its vision and values together with children, families, and staff, creating a strong sense of shared purpose and ownership. This collaborative approach ensured the vision remained meaningful, relevant, and responsive to the needs of the settings community. Staff demonstrated the agreed values through warm, respectful interactions and inclusive approaches to care and learning. The vision and values clearly influenced how staff prioritised children's wellbeing and supported participation for all children.
Leadership within the service demonstrated a strong culture of reflection and continuous improvement. Leaders maintained a well established, robust quality assurance calendar, which they used effectively to monitor, review, and evaluate practice across the setting. A robust range of quality assurance systems was embedded, including self-evaluation activities, audits of accidents and incidents, peer monitoring and staff working groups linked to key improvement priorities. As a result, children benefited from consistently high-quality experiences, improved safety and wellbeing, and learning environments that were responsive to their needs
Improvement planning was well structured and clearly identified priorities that were being embedded, explored, or implemented. This demonstrated a clear improvement cycle and a thoughtful approach to change. Improvements within the service were well considered and responsive to the needs of children and families, with leaders using evidence and feedback to shape next steps.

The service consistently gathered and analysed feedback from children, families and staff. There was clear evidence that feedback was used effectively to inform decision making, resulting in positive change and improved outcomes. They remained open to challenge, and this was reflected in the progress made since the previous inspection.
Staff were empowered to take on leadership roles through meaningful involvement in working groups and improvement projects. They made effective use of national guidance, practice notes and the Quality Improvement Framework to reflect on practice and identify areas for development. This approach strengthened a clear, comprehensive and well maintained oversight of training undertaken by all staff. As a result, children benefited from a skilled, knowledgeable and confident staff team whose practice was continually improving.

The service demonstrated an understanding of safeguarding and incident management. They worked collaboratively with other services to plan appropriate and timely support for children and families. We discussed areas where further clarity would strengthen policies, including procedures for notifying the Care Inspectorate of significant events. The service took action following feedback which demonstrated their responsive practice.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 5 - Very Good

Children experienced an environment that was safe, welcoming and thoughtfully designed. There were opportunities to relax, run outside, climb and many others. The service recently made adjustments to the lighting in the room, ensuring that it was softer and more homely. Staff highlighted the positive impact this change had on children with us during the inspection. As a result, children experienced calm, homely spaces which promoted their emotional wellbeing.

Overall spaces were well maintained and provided appropriate levels of challenge, enabling children to develop confidence and resilience. Areas such as the construction and cosy spaces offered a balanced range of active and calming experiences that supported children's varying needs. This meant children had opportunities which reflected their interests and needs. One child shared "nursery is so much fun and we make new friends".

Staff remained vigilant to risk, with individualised approaches in place for children who required additional support. Staff confidently applied this knowledge in their day-to-day interactions, ensuring children were supported to participate safely in a wide range of play and learning experiences. Practice was consistent and well understood across the team, with staff adapting their approach in response to children's needs.

Children were actively involved in discussions about keeping themselves safe, with staff using everyday experiences to promote understanding. These conversations were meaningful and ongoing, captured in a floor book and revisited with peers and families to reinforce learning. As a result, children developed a confident understanding of how to keep themselves safe, supporting their independence, awareness and ability to manage risk within their play and learning.

The service valued outdoor play as a key aspect of children's wellbeing. Children enjoyed their time outdoors as they explored a variety of opportunities such as the mud kitchen and water play. This promoted children's exploration and sustained engagement.

Whilst prioritising safety the service embraced a positive balance to risk in play. Children engaged in experiences that allowed them to challenge themselves and take appropriate risks showing a good understanding of recognising and managing their own risks. This was particularly strong outdoors and evident through forest visits where children took part in climbing trees and making fires. Further opportunities indoors, such as access to real life experiences, would enhance this aspect of provision further.

The organisation of the setting promoted free movement and choice. Staff responded flexibly to children's interests and ideas, enabling meaningful choice and decision making. For example, staff initially set up an experience to encourage exploration; however, children showed little interest. Staff responded quickly to children's emerging interests in junk modelling and adapted the experience to reflect this. This reinforced that children's views were valued and supported growing confidence, and a strong sense of ownership within the environment.
There was a shared understanding of the positive impact that multi-sensory play had on children's wellbeing. The sensory room provided a calm, well-resourced space that met a range of sensory sensitivities. Children benefitted significantly from access to this space, which supported regulation, exploration, and wellbeing in a responsive way.

Children play and learn — 5 - Very Good

Children were highly engaged, motivated, and confident in their play. They were well supported to lead their own learning and make meaningful choices throughout the day. The range of experiences available were stimulating and developmentally appropriate, offering rich opportunities for creativity, curiosity, exploration, and enjoyment. These experiences supported sustained engagement and positive wellbeing.

Children's engagement and participation had been a recent focus for improvement within the service. Staff listened carefully to children's views, respected individual preferences, and responded sensitively to children's likes and dislikes. For example, staff consulted with children about what activities they would like

to take part in and what they did not enjoy. Children were given the opportunity to choose resources and influence the experience, ensuring it reflected their interests and preferences. This approach ensured children felt genuinely heard and valued, supporting high levels of participation, enjoyment, and engagement in learning experiences.

Interactions were well paced and responsive. Staff skilfully extended learning through purposeful conversation, modelling language, and following children's interests and cues. For example, during indoor play, staff supported children who were building a house using blocks by asking open ended questions, introducing new vocabulary, and encouraging problem solving. Staff stepped in to support collaboration when needed and stepped back to allow children to lead. This demonstrated effective child centred planning and assessment, where staff used observation and knowledge of the child to shape interactions and extend learning.

Staff were attentive and responsive to children's needs and used a wide range of inclusive communication approaches, including visuals, Makaton, and consistent language. This ensured that all children were supported to understand, communicate and participate in experiences. One family told us "children really like coming here, lots of fun things to do".

Planning and assessment were largely effective in supporting children's progress across the service. Staff used observations well to capture children's voices, taking time to listen carefully to what children said and recording this meaningfully. Children's comments and interests were used to inform planning and identify a child centred approach. Staff planned collaboratively and had dedicated time to reflect and review experiences. Communication across the day and within the team was effective, which meant planning and provision worked seamlessly across the service and supported consistent experiences for children.

Learning was shared with parents through electronic learning journals. This supported continuity of learning and helped reinforce children's experiences between home and the setting. Children had identified next steps in learning which were reviewed regularly. The service had identified the need to improve consistency within children's learning journals. This would further support staff to celebrate children's progress over time and clearly identify further areas for development.

Targeted supports were well planned and reviewed to promote positive outcomes for children, including those participating in specific interventions such as lunch club and sensory time. Staff routinely monitored and evaluated the impact of these supports, using reflective practice to adapt approaches where required. As a result, children were well supported to make meaningful progress in their learning.

Children are supported to achieve — 5 - Very Good

Relationships between staff and children were warm, nurturing, and respectful, which strongly supported children's emotional wellbeing, and sense of security. Staff responded sensitively to children's emotional needs, providing reassurance, comfort, and appropriate physical affection. As a result, children felt valued and respected.
Transitions between experiences were well planned and managed, supporting children's individual needs and promoting their wellbeing. Overall, children were supported sensitively and respectfully during routines, with staff demonstrating a strong understanding of children's preferences. The manager shared further plans to strengthen children's choice during periods of transition to promote a culture of independence, ownership and active participation in their daily experiences.

Snack and lunchtime experiences promoted a calm, nurturing and positive social environment where

children were encouraged to be independent and make their own choices. Children served themselves confidently, chose food based on their preferences and engaged in relaxed conversations with peers and staff. This supported the development of social skills and positive relationships. Staff showed kindness and genuine care, recognised children's individual achievements and provided the right level of support to meet individual needs. The rolling lunch approach allowed children to decide when to eat. Careful planning, during this busy time of day, ensured children continued to develop independence, confidence and strong, nurturing relationships

Where children required additional support, they received consistent, supportive and responsive care. Practice was effective in ensuring that children's individual needs were understood and met. Personal planning was developed collaboratively with families and was robust in outlining tailored approaches to support all children. As a result, children were included and supported to make progress in their learning.

The service worked effectively with other professionals to ensure that appropriate strategies were in place to support children's wellbeing and development. This multi agency approach strengthened planning and helped ensure children's needs were met in a coordinated way. Highly effective communication passports were in place for some children and reflected children's interests, and what made them unique. These were strengths based, meaningful, and supported individualised approaches to care. Staff interactions with children reflected the information within these plans, demonstrating strong links between planning, assessment, and practice.

Families were welcomed into the service and accessed the playroom at the end of the day. Staff greeted families warmly and engaged in regular conversation. The service provided meaningful opportunities for families to participate in stay and play sessions. Children spoke enthusiastically about these experiences, demonstrating pride and enjoyment in sharing learning alongside their families. One family shared "staff are wonderful, always there to greet you". They felt their views were actively sought and valued. This meaningful engagement supported strong partnership working and ensured that families' perspectives helped shape the direction and ethos of the service.

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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	5 - Very Good
Children experience high quality spaces	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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