

The Kindergarten Nursery Limited

Day Care of Children

196 Westburn Road
Aberdeen
AB25 2LT

Telephone: 01224 633 803

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
12 June 2025

Service provided by:
The Kindergarten Nursery Limited

Service provider number:
SP2014012256

Service no:
CS2014324019

About the service

The Kindergarten Nursery Limited provides a daycare of children service within the residential area of Midstocket in Aberdeen. The service provides care for a maximum of 37 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. No more than 10 are aged under two years. The service operates from a large town house in the centre of Aberdeen. Good sized playrooms are available for children on the ground and first floor. An enclosed back garden is available for children to play outdoors. The service is close to local parks and community areas with on street parking and bus services close by.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place from Tuesday 10 June to Thursday 12 June between the hours of 09:30 and 17:45. 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.

To inform our evaluation we:

- Spoke with children and observed their experiences.
- Received 11 completed questionnaires from parents and carers.
- Spoke with staff and management.
- Observed staff practice.
- Reviewed documents.

As part of this inspection, we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- Staff deployment.
- Safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors.
- The quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met.
- Children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

- Children were very well supported by staff who were consistently responsive to their needs.
- Good quality child led play, learning and development opportunities were available to children throughout the day.
- Outdoor play and learning was enhanced by the regular use of resources in the community including a variety of green spaces and walks to local shops and libraries.
- Some improvements had been made to the environment to support a more welcoming and inviting space.
- Strong leadership and a whole team commitment to improvement had led to the continued development of the service which impacted positively on children's wellbeing, play and learning.
- There was a good mix of skills and experience across the staff team which contributed to 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?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - 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 different parts of this key question as very good and good, with an overall grade of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were supported well by consistently caring and nurturing staff. Gentle tones of voice were used with the children, hugs and reassurance were provided and staff were responsive to changing needs. One parent told us, "staff are very friendly and I feel confident my child is well cared for.." and another that, "they have always been helpful and interested in our whole family's wellbeing. We have developed a relationship of trust."

Significant improvements had been made to personal plans since the last inspection. They gave a clear overview of children's individual needs and how these were to be supported. The information provided was consistent with what staff told us and in our observations of how children were supported. Parents and carers told us that they were involved in the development of personal plans which were regularly reviewed to ensure information was up to date.

Staff knew the children and their needs very well and it was clear that trusting and secure attachments had been developed. Strategies and plans very much took account of individual needs. This included transition arrangements, for example settling in to the nursery or moving rooms, which were carefully thought out and supported. Children's medical needs were well supported by knowledgeable staff. Clear and effective arrangements were in place for recording and storage of medication.

Parents and carers were now welcomed back into the service for dropping off and collecting their children. This had helped to strengthen relationships and support positive communication. We observed parents and carers receiving detailed and meaningful feedback about their children's day and their experiences. Parents and carers appreciated increased access to the nursery. One parent told us, "I like the change of allowing parents back into the reception area as this has afforded more of an opportunity to discuss my child's day."

Positive changes had been made to support a more relaxing meal and snack time experience with meaningful connections to support social skills. A rolling lunch was now in place for older children, meaning that children were not all seated for meals at the same time. Staff told us that children were enjoying the quieter and calmer experience this supported. There were also increased opportunities for children to self serve and increase their independence skills. We saw that children were confident in self serving their food and clearing away their dishes and cutlery. Staff supervised children closely and supported them to keep themselves safe whilst eating. We suggested jugs and cups on individual tables to support hydration and provide opportunities for children to pour their own drinks. We also suggested that staff ensure they sit with children at all times whilst they were eating to enhance social interactions. Both suggestions were put in place and supported a very positive experience with staff also eating alongside the children.

Children in the upstairs room were supported very well whilst eating. An additional member of staff had been introduced to support these children at key times of the day including when children were eating. This ensured that children were consistently well supported, kept safe and meal and snack times were enjoyable and relaxed.

Sleep arrangements and routines supported a positive experience for children, with individual needs catered for. Comfort and reassurance was provided by caring staff to ensure children felt secure.

A sensory room had recently been created downstairs and provided a lovely space for children when they needed some quiet time for relaxing or for when feeling overwhelmed. Staff told us that this space was very well used by the children.

1.3 Play and learning

Children were happy and engaged in various play and learning opportunities. They enjoyed a range of resources and consistent positive interactions with staff.

In the 0-2 room the children were having much fun exploring bubbles and were learning how to use bubble wands independently. They were very engaged in creating bubbles with support. This provided natural learning opportunities. The children were learning how to stop bubble mixture spilling and how to pour. Keeping language simple and use of repetition helped to support children's language development.

The 0-2 room play kitchen had some items which supported imaginative play, such as pans, cake tin, colander and egg cups. It would benefit from adding some items for the children to use in the kitchen such as pom poms and pine cones and additional real life items such as cereal boxes and egg cartons etc.

We saw some lovely examples of imaginative play, including a staff member having a conversation with a child in their first language on telephones. This helped to support the child's language development and helped to develop positive relationships.

In the 2-5 room an attractively presented kitchen play area, which included some real life items such as pots, pans and chopping boards, provided opportunities for role play. Adding in some resources such as dried pasta and lentils would provide increased opportunities for children to pour, measure and stir. An old suitcase containing real items such as a keyboard, remote controls, calculator and a watch helped enhance the role play experience.

The older children spent much time in the fully enclosed garden really engaged in various activities which supported their learning. A group of children, for example built a tower with staff and this was used as an opportunity to count, talk about shapes and colours. Other children had been supported to make kites with paper, string, tape and coloured pencils. A range of books were available outside and we saw children independently look at the books and also engage in storytelling by staff. These activities helped to support children's literacy, numeracy and language development.

Parents and carers felt that there was a good variety of activities to support their children's play and learning. These included community visits including walks to local shops to buy healthy snacks and bus trips to the library and art gallery. Creative activities included painting, constructing items, creating a puppet show and baking.

Most resources were in good condition although a number of blunt coloured pencils and no unused paper easily accessible limited children art activities. The downstairs construction area offered a range of different wooden blocks and wooden shapes to support children's problem solving and creative skills. Hard hats and miniature traffic cones helped to support role play. We were told that other construction items such as tape measures, rulers and protractors were available however we did not see these. Care should be taken to

ensure that resources are consistently cared for and well presented to maximise positive play and learning opportunities.

The staff team had been working hard on improving the observation, planning and assessment for the children to enhance their learning. A new planning format had been introduced, which focused on both intentional and responsive planning. Positive examples of where staff had created interesting and enjoyable activities based on children's interests were shared with us. Children's achievements and some relevant next steps were included along with children's individual progression. Planning was still in the early stages and this was recognised by the team who were motivated to develop it further.

Staff took some natural opportunities for extending learning throughout the day, however this could be developed further and be more consistent across the staff team.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

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

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from an environment which was well furnished, homely and inviting. There was plenty natural light and windows were open to provide some ventilation. All areas were clean and odour free.

There was ample space for children to engage in a variety of play and learning activities. Indoor and outdoor environments had been improved to encourage children to be curious, to problem solve, to use their imagination and to have fun. The team had been reviewing all play areas and looking at how these could be developed further including increasing the range of loose parts to support open ended play.

The environment was secure. Clear, well managed arrangements were in place to ensure that staff greeted families coming in to and out of the building. Opportunities were taken to support children to consider their own safety and that of others.

Some improvements to the environment had been undertaken, for example the stair carpet had been repaired where needed, areas treated for mould and lighting improved in the hallway. This all helped to ensure children received care in an environment that let them know that they mattered. Environmental improvements were ongoing. We discussed the benefit of using more neutral colours to help support a calming environment for children.

Infection prevention and control was well managed and helped to keep children healthy. Handwashing was well supported and cleaning routines were very effective. Staff ensured that they protected children's privacy and dignity when supporting them with toileting and nappy changing. The downstairs nappy changing room had been refurbished and was attractive and easy to clean. Nappy changing followed best practice guidance. It was also used as an opportunity for very positive engagement with children.

The team recognised the importance of children having regular access to outdoor play to support both their physical and mental positive wellbeing. The children enjoyed outdoor play on a daily basis. They also had regular opportunities to visit the various green spaces nearby, including Westburn Park and Victoria Park, and this was really valued by parents and carers. Free flow indoor/outdoor play was in place for children

downstairs and was working well. Children upstairs were supported to get outdoors and enjoy a range of experiences on a daily basis.

An inviting outdoor wooden shelter had been added since the last inspection and was well used by the children for reading, drawing, exploring the collection of plastic animals. Further improvements to the outdoor space would be beneficial, for example, developing a more natural environment by adding more plants, bird feeders and wooden chimes. There was limited loose parts in the garden. Adding to these would support children to be more creative in their play.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

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

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service vision, values and aims were made available to families and supported staff to develop and maintain shared goals.

The team had been working hard to make improvements to the nursery and this was having a positive impact on outcomes for children. Staff confirmed they were very involved in the self evaluation of the service. They were also clear about what improvements had been made and the impact and were committed to making further identified improvements.

An improvement plan was in place which highlighted priorities and timescales to make improvements and how to take these forward. These were all outcome focused, ensuring that planned improvements were linked to improving outcomes for children. It was clear to see what action had been taken to progress the improvement plan and the impact this had made. The manager had been on a range of improvement training and had used their learning to drive improvements forward, using well established methodology. Staff, children and their families were all actively encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions. Small, manageable changes were made, reviewed and amended and developed further where necessary. Changes made and the impact were evaluated.

The manager had improved the quality assurance calendar for the service to ensure it was more comprehensive and effectively covered all areas. It was clear who was responsible for each type of audit. We could see that audits were being progressed as per the plan.

An e-book completed by the local authority, who provide support and monitoring to the nursery, captured the journey of improvement the service has been on. It recognised the work undertaken by the team to make improvements, including to the outdoor space and mealtime experience. It also identified further improvements that could be made, some of which were identified during this inspection. This was fed back to the manager who ensured changes were promptly made.

Peer reviews, where staff observe each others practice and feed back their findings, were taking place and supported practice development. Very good quality prompts and guidance helped to ensure that staff completed these thoroughly and with an improvement focus. Any identified areas for development were then discussed on a one to one basis with staff and followed up through a further observation.

How good is our staff team?

4 - Good

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

4.3 Staff deployment

The nursery was appropriately staffed by a committed, motivated and experienced staff team. This helped to ensure that children received quality care and learning experiences and that they were kept safe. Where children needed extra support this was effectively managed. All parents and carers who provided feedback to us agreed that there was always enough staff in this service to meet their children's needs. One parent told us, "there is always someone to attend to our child's needs, they are very well organised and assign their staff efficiently through nursery."

Busier times of the day, including lunchtimes and arriving/leaving the nursery, were well managed with children consistently well supported. Verbal handovers with parents and carers at the end of the day were positive with meaningful information shared.

Staff were always well deployed and they communicated well together to ensure that all areas of the nursery were well supervised and that children's needs were responded to quickly and effectively. Staff were able to address potential hazards and resolve any disagreements very quickly and positively which kept the children safe. Effective deployment of staff also supported children downstairs to have free flow between the indoor space and the garden.

There was a good mix of skills and experience across the staff team which contributed to positive outcomes for children. Most staff had, or were working towards a recognised qualification. Recent training opportunities for staff including exploring various best practice publications had helped to develop staffs understanding and confidence, resulting in a positive impact to staff practice. One staff member told us, "understanding schemas has helped me recognise patterns in children's play and behaviour that show how they are exploring and making sense of the world. This knowledge allows me to plan more effectively by offering materials and activities that match those patterns, helping children stay engaged, challenged, and supported in their development."

Mentoring was in place for all staff and was very much welcomed by new and experienced staff as an opportunity to support continuous professional development by reflecting on practice, sharing ideas and suggestions and making improvements.

A low staff turnover and a number of established staff helped to support continuity of care for the children. This helped children to feel well supported and promoted positive, trusting relationships to be developed.

Staff were respectful in their conversations with children and with each other. They were a cohesive team who consistently fed back to us that they all work really well together and were very supportive of one another. They felt well supported by the manager. This helped to create a positive and supportive culture leading to a welcoming and nurturing environment.

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 support children's care and wellbeing, the provider and manager should ensure that personal plans consistently contain clear information on how children are to be supported. Staff should use this information to support children's development and progression.

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

'My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected (HSCS 1.23).

We directed the service to the Care Inspectorate document 'Guide for providers on personal planning. Early learning and childcare' (2021).

This area for improvement was made on 16 August 2024.

Action taken since then

Significant improvements had been made to personal plans since the last inspection. They gave a clear overview of children's individual needs and how these were to be supported. Please see quality indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support for more information.

This area for improvement was found to have been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children are nurtured and supported through their daily experiences, the provider, manager and staff should ensure that mealtimes are a safe, relaxing experience that meets the individual needs of children.

This should include, but not be limited to ensuring that:

- Mealtimes promote choice, independence and social skills for all ages of children.
- Food provided to children is appropriate for their age and stage of development.
- Staff are skilled in their understanding of safe foods for children and how to support weaning.

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 meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19); and

'I can enjoy an unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed atmosphere as possible' (HSCS 1.35).

We directed the service to the Care Inspectorate document 'Good practice guidance: prevention and management of choking episodes in babies and children' (2019).

This area for improvement was made on 16 August 2024.

Action taken since then

Significant work had been undertaken to improve the snack and mealtime experience for children. This included making changes to staff deployment and staff breaks to ensure that there was always plenty staff available to support children. Staff receiving further training in relation to safe foods for children and how to support weaning effectively. Changes made to the routine to allow children to develop their independence skills including self serving. Please see quality indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support for more information.

This area for improvement was found to have been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure children have fun and experience high quality play, learning and development opportunities the provider and manager should:

- Ensure planning processes are effective to promote children's learning.
- Ensure that staff demonstrate an understanding of child development and how to use play to support children's learning.
- Ensure that observation and assessment of children's individual learning supports and identifies progress.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (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 16 August 2024.

Action taken since then

The staff team had been working hard on improving the observation, planning and assessment for the children. A new planning format had been introduced, which focused on both intentional and responsive planning. This still was in its early stages however children's play and learning experiences were positive. Staff had also recently undertaken relevant training which they were beginning to put into practice. Please see quality indicator 1.3 Play and learning for more information.

This area for improvement was found to have been met with play and learning for children remaining an area the staff team were continuing to work on.

Previous area for improvement 4

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of children the provider, manager and staff should ensure that the environment is safely and respectfully maintained. This should include, but not be limited to ensuring:

- That there is sufficient lighting on the stairs to ensure safety and in the playrooms to support effective use of this area.
- That trip hazards on the stairs are repaired.
- Unpleasant odours are effectively eliminated.
- The environment throughout is of good standard to promote children's safety and wellbeing.

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

'My environment is safe and secure' (HSCS 5.19); and

'My environment is relaxed, welcoming, peaceful and free from avoidable and intrusive noise and smells' (HSCS 5.20).

This area for improvement was made on 16 August 2024.

Action taken since then

The above issues had all been addressed. The environment was regularly inspected and action taken quickly to address any hazards and maintenance issues. Some improvements had been made to the décor to support a lighter and more neutral space. The provider was aware that the nursery would benefit from re-decoration and confirmed that this was in the future plans for nursery improvements.

This area for improvement was found to have been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

To support the health and safety needs of children, the provider and manager should ensure nappy changing spaces are well maintained at all times and safe infection prevention and control practice are carried out by staff.

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

'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.24).

We directed the service to the Care Inspectorate document 'Nappy changing for Early Learning and Childcare settings (excluding childminders)' (2023).

This area for improvement was made on 16 August 2024.

Action taken since then

The downstairs nappy changing room had been completely refurbished since the last inspection and was a bright and welcoming space. The design ensured that it could be easily cleaned to support effective infection prevention and control practices. Both nappy changing rooms were clean and odour free during the inspection.

This area for improvement was found to have been met.

Previous area for improvement 6

To ensure high quality care and experiences for children, quality assurance and self-evaluation should be embedded into practice. This should include, but not be limited to ensuring:

- Children and families are meaningfully involved and influence changes within the setting.
- Quality assurance, including self-evaluation and improvement plans lead to high quality outcomes and experiences for children and families.

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

'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance systems' (HSCS 4.19).

We directed the service to the Care Inspectorate Early Learning and Childcare online improvement hub.

This area for improvement was made on 16 August 2024.

Action taken since then

Clear and effective systems were in place for involving staff, children and their families in providing feedback about the service and how it could be improved. We could see how this was then used to develop the service further. Improvements had been made to the service since the last inspection and these had led to positive outcomes for children. There were also clear plans in place to identify further improvements and to ensure actions were progressed. Please see quality indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well for more information.

This area for improvement was found to have been met.

Previous area for improvement 7

To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the provider and manager should ensure staff are deployed effectively in a way that ensures children are cared for by staff who have the mix of appropriate knowledge, skills and experience.

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).

This area for improvement was made on 16 August 2024.

Action taken since then

Staff were effectively deployed at all times during the inspection visit. An additional member of staff had been deployed to the 0-2 room over lunchtimes and other key times of the day to ensure all children received consistent and good quality support. Most staff had a recognised qualification or were undertaking formal training and there was ongoing training to support staff development. Please see quality indicator 4.3 Staff deployment for more information.

This area for improvement was found to have been met.

Previous area for improvement 8

To ensure children are cared for by skilled and suitable staff, the provider and manager should ensure recruitment procedures consistently meet the recommended guidance.

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

'I am confident that people who support and care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited' (HSCS 4.24).

We directed the service to the Care Inspectorate document 'Safer recruitment through better recruitment' (2023).

This area for improvement was made on 16 August 2024.

Action taken since then

Sampling of recruitment records confirmed that safer recruitment best practice was being followed.

This area for improvement was found to have been 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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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