

Lincluden Nursery Day Care of Children

Lincluden Primary School
Lincluden
Dumfries
DG2 0PU

Telephone: 01387 273 010

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
22 May 2025

Service provided by:
Dumfries & Galloway Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2003015495

About the service

Lincluden Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 50 children aged from 2 years to not yet attending primary school at any one time of whom no more than 10 children are aged under 3 years.

Children are being cared for in a secure nursery suite, which is a part of Lincluden Primary School. They have the use of their own rooms and also timetabled use of spaces in the main school, where they have opportunities to be part of the whole school community as well as for active and energetic play indoors. The nursery has its own outdoor area and also uses parts of the school playground so that children have opportunities to learn about the natural world.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced visit which took place on Tuesday 21 May and Wednesday 22 May 2025. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate Early Learning and Childcare team.

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.

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 members of their families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents, including children's learning folders and personal care plans.

Key messages

- Happy, confident children who were having fun as they played together.
- Welcoming, friendly and supportive staff team who work together to meet the needs of the children.
- Well-resourced outdoor area where children chose to play, experiment, explore and make sense of the world around them.
- Focus on improving experiences and outcomes for children so that they are supported to achieve their full potential.

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?	5 - Very 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

Quality Indicator 1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

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.

Children were cared for by a warm, friendly and kind staff team, who knew them and their families very well. Staff praised children and celebrated their achievements. They encouraged children to be helpful and think of others. Children were enabled to try things out for themselves and to develop independence and this meant that children were happy and confident, and settled in an inclusive and safe environment.

Parents were welcomed into the nursery and had a variety of opportunities to share information and talk to staff, including at daily handover times, an online platform and stay and play sessions. Parents told us that they "have great communication with both myself and my child. I fully trust in the care they give". "All the staff are always happy to see you and welcome your child each day. They are very kind and friendly people who are helping mould our children's lives for a greater future".

All children had personal care plans, which were based on information gathered from parents, using the wellbeing indicators. Key information was transferred to a one page profile, which provided staff with what they needed to know to be able to meet children's needs effectively. Children's plans were updated as their needs changed, as well as at six month reviews. Plans were used as the starting point for planning for children's needs and interests and we observed that additional support for children was sought when needed. Parents told us "I sit down with my child's key worker and go through his plan . I can also take his book home to see his progress whenever I need and if any problems we discuss".

The pace of the day was well managed by staff, who understood the importance of a balance of activity and rest on children's development. Those children who needed to sleep during the day were well provided for, and we saw that routines reflected individual children's needs and family wishes.

Children enjoyed sociable and relaxed meals and snacks. Staff sat with children and engaged them in conversation and supported them to develop their skills and independence. Children were encouraged to make choices and we saw that most children were choosing to eat salad and vegetables. Staff conversed with children about a wide variety of topics and engaged with children sensitively and respectfully. Staff knew about children's allergies and dietary preferences and ensured that each child got the right meal for them. Parents told us "my child loves the various options to choose from. He enjoys his snacks and lunches in nursery and will quite often stick to what he knows but they offer hot and cold meals every day with healthy sides and snacks".

Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and Learning

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

Children were having fun as they played. Children played together very well and had formed close friendships with their peers. They benefitted from a mixture of planned and spontaneous play activities and

we observed lovely examples of complex and co-operative play, particularly in the new construction area outdoors.

Staff supported children effectively by asking questions and providing them with the resources they needed. Staff encouraged children to solve problems, and be curious about the world around them, for example they had fun experimenting with a solar powered fountain. Children were learning to keep themselves safe with a variety of risky play experiences both indoors and out. Room layout enabled children to develop creativity as well as numeracy and literacy skills and we have asked that staff ensure that these opportunities are incorporated consistently into children's play both indoors and out. We observed that children engaged in play experiences for prolonged periods of time showing high levels of engagement, excitement, wonder and joy.

The service was developing planning approaches that were play-based, child-centred and focused on children's interests and needs, through meaningful observations. This was helping to ensure that children were engaged in their play and progressing in their learning. All children had learning folders which provided a record of their experiences at nursery and these contained a variety of observations. Some folders contained evaluations and next steps which were sometimes linked to observations, however, this was not consistent across all folders and for all children. Ongoing training and support would help staff to further develop skills in carrying out meaningful observations and evaluations which extend and challenge children's learning.

Attainment was a focus for the nursery and we have discussed what this meant with the nursery manager and have agreed that it would be beneficial to focus attention on outcomes for all children individually more systematically. Staff had been discussing moderation and evaluation and this now needs to be tested and embedded in their practice.

Children had opportunities to learn about their local community and the wider world. They told us about going on a bus to a local adventure farm park and there had been visits from other interesting people like the fire service. Parents told us about "Walks to local ice bowl, supermarkets, egg rolling, parks etc playing sports in the school playground".

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

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.

Children were cared for in a purpose built nursery suite, which was bright, open and welcoming. There was a secure outdoor area which children accessed freely throughout the day. A good range of toys and games were set up for children and they were able to ask for what they needed. Storage of resources were clearly accessible and thought out, which ensured that children could choose the right play experiences to suit their needs and interests.

Children had very good opportunities to be energetic and active, particularly outdoors. Indoors provided a cooler and more calm environment for children. However, the room used by older children would benefit from a protected cosy space, especially for those children who wanted to relax after their lunch. Staff had identified the outdoor area as somewhere they could continue to improve, for example they had identified that an outside tap and sail for shelter would be useful.

The setting is well furnished, comfortable and calm. Furniture was of an appropriate size for children. Appropriate procedures were in place for maintaining the building and toys. There were a variety of different displays around the setting including on interest tables and on walls. Most wall displays were not accessible for children, and a review of who displays are for would ensure that information is shared appropriately.

There were appropriate procedures in place for controlling the spread of infection. Children and staff followed good hand hygiene practices. The setting was clean and free of clutter. The nappy changing space was appropriate for children and toilets had good signage to remind children to flush toilets and wash hands.

The environment was safe and secure. Children were encouraged to think about keeping safe and were reminded when necessary, for example not putting knives in their mouths and wearing cycle helmets and hard hats in the construction area. We discussed the Care Inspectorate's SIMOA campaign with staff and agreed that they might find this helpful for supporting children to think about safety and risk assessment. Staff carried out daily checks of rooms to ensure that spaces were safe for children and adults. Access to the building was secure, visitors signed in and were monitored, gates locked and exit buttons were well out of children's reach. Regular headcounts ensured that staff knew where children were throughout the day.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

Quality Indicator 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

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

Children were cared for in a service with a vision, values and aims for how they would be supported to learn and develop. These were aligned to the school aims and were reviewed regularly with children and parents. Children were familiar with the values and were encouraged to live them by being kind and respectful to one another.

There had been some changes in the leadership of the setting in the last few months and management and staff were open and honest about the challenges they had faced. Staff had regular opportunities to meet and reflect on their work and the needs and progress of the children. Self-evaluation formed a core part of meetings and we agreed that the development of more critical thinking would support staff in identifying more meaningful next steps for the setting.

A quality assurance programme was in place which was lead by the acting manager and which underpinned the setting's improvement plan. This included audits of process like medication and accidents and incidents. We agreed that now would be a useful time for practitioners in the setting to take a more active role in these processes, for example by greater use of peer review of children's folders and plans. Practitioners had recently been developing their procedures for moderation and achievement and we agreed that the setting should continue to develop this so that staff are enabled to embed changes to the way they observe and record children's achievements and progress.

Children's voice was evident throughout the nursery, and children's interests and opinions were clearly valued by management and staff. Parents confirmed that they were welcomed into the nursery and had opportunities to have a say about the setting and their child's care. They told us "The staff are always happy to chat and welcome your child in."

How good is our staff team?**4 - Good****Quality Indicator 4.3 Staff deployment**

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

Children were being cared for by a professional, friendly and welcoming staff team. Staff told us that they felt well supported by one another and that they worked together as a team. Staff were very open about the challenges they had recently faced in relation to staffing levels and about how they had worked together to meet children's needs. Parents also told us "sometimes it feels like there's a lot of children to staff".

Generally, we observed that there were sufficient staff to meet the needs of the children and that children were well supported by staff during our visit. We noted that staff were not designated to particular areas of the nursery and they told us that this was because they followed the children. However, we noted that this meant that there were some missed opportunities both for supporting children and for ensuring that the environment had the right resources to follow through children's ideas. We also noted that at different times of the day, for example mealtimes, there was a focus on tasks like tidying up, rather than ensuring that children were well enough supported. Whilst practitioners did have some opportunities to develop leadership, we discussed building on this to include room and resources management.

The staff team were keen to learn and develop their practice. All members of staff were supported to attend training which enabled them to meet children's needs, follow their interests and meet their professional registration requirements. All staff had a confident knowledge and understanding of the correct procedures for safeguarding children.

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?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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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