

# Sheuchan Nursery Day Care of Children

Sheuchan Primary School  
Leswalt High Road  
Stranraer  
DG9 0AL

Telephone: 01776 706 977

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
11 June 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Dumfries & Galloway Council

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003501

**Service no:**  
CS2003015542

## About the service

Sheuchan Nursery is a daycare of children's service and provides full day, part time and flexible sessions on a term time basis.

The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 50 children at any one time, aged from 2 years to not yet attending primary school, of whom no more than 10 will be under 3 years. The service provider is Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Sheuchan nursery is attached to Sheuchan Primary School. The service is located in the town of Stranraer, in the council area of Dumfries and Galloway. It is close to local amenities including shops, parks and beaches. The service comprises of three large playrooms, an open plan foyer and children's cloakroom, a separate dining room and a large enclosed outdoor play area.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, which took place on 9 and 11 June 2025 between 9:45 and 16:00. On the first day of inspection, 43 children attended the service and on the second day 39 were in attendance. 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 and 12 of their families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed and sampled documents
- spoke with visiting professionals

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 happy, safe and secure in the service
- They were having fun playing with their friends
- They were actively leading their play and learning
- Staff had a kind, caring and nurturing approach
- Staff knew children well and supported their learning
- The team worked well together to ensure children were progressing well
- The service designed the play areas well to promote learning
- Family involvement was a key strength of the service
- The manager led the service well

## 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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very 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?

5 - Very Good

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, safe and secure in the care of staff who knew them well. They were comfortable and settled in the service and independently moved around all areas available to them. This helped promote children's confidence and independence.

Staff were kind, caring and nurturing towards children and they formed positive and trusting relationships with them. When children needed comfort or reassurance staff were sensitive and responsive to their needs. They praised children for persevering in their self-care and encouraged them to make decisions. This helped promote children's self-esteem.

Personal plans were in place and staff used wellbeing indicators to ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing needs were met. The plans outlined specific strategies needed for children who required additional support. Staff met with families regularly to update the plans and reflect on children's care and development. The service was reviewing the template and had identified improvements to ensure all the necessary information required for children was documented.

Mealtimes were relaxed, unhurried social experiences. A separate dining area meant that children could continue with their play until they wanted to have their lunch. The rolling routine worked well and staff ensured that all children received their meals. Staff sat with children and they talked together about the morning activities. Children were served their meals from the hot trolley and they selected their cutlery and crockery. We asked the service to provide more opportunities for children to self-serve by placing the salad and vegetable platters on the tables. This will further develop children's self-help skills.

Cosy dens were located in all playrooms and the foyer which meant that children could take time away from their play to rest and relax. They enjoyed the quiet time alone or with their friends to chat and read books. This contributed to children's emotional wellbeing.

### 1.3 Play and learning

Children were actively engaged in their play and learning. They led their learning and directed their play by following their interests and ideas. They chose where they wanted to play and moved freely between playrooms and the outdoor area. This enabled children to make decisions about their play.

There were extensive opportunities for children to learn and develop their skills. Each playroom offered different experiences and similar learning areas such as arts and crafts meant that children could create junk models or paint in different play rooms. This enabled children to transfer their learning and extend their ideas in different ways.

Construction areas were located indoors and outdoors. Children played together and used a range of different sized blocks and planks as well as loose parts. They were actively engaged in their learning as they enthusiastically built roads, ramps and tunnels. This meant that children were involved in play that was meaningful to them.

Sensory play included sand, water, play dough and clay. They explored the clay with their hands and talked about the texture as they added water. They used modelling tools to make their shapes and designs and added sticks and small stones to create their models. This helped promote children's creative skills.

There were several interest tables and areas located throughout the service, which helped spark children's curiosity. Real life objects such as magnifying glasses, magnets and digital artifacts enabled children to explore, discover and investigate different objects of interest. They were curious about the electrical plugs and sockets. They realised they had seen them at home and started to look around the foyer for sockets. This meant that children were making connections to the world around them.

The outdoor area was popular and children had a broad range of resources to choose from. They played on the tree swing, balanced on the beams and climbed the climbing frame. Staff joined in with children's play. They sat with children and had fun with them 'making soup with broccoli' and adding ingredients such as water, herbs and mud. They followed children's interests. For example, children were cycling and they asked staff to pour water on the ground so that they could make tyre tracks. As a result, children were having fun playing outdoors.

Children participated in group games. They sat together and took turns tapping the syllables of their names on a large drum. They counted the syllables and learned about the different sounds in their names. This contributed to children's language development.

Staff facilitated and extended children's learning by asking open-ended questions and encouraging children to think and problem solve. Through conversation, staff extended children's mathematical language by encouraging children to count and identify shapes, patterns and sizes. This meant that children were developing their numeracy skills.

There was a balance of responsive and intentional planning to support child led play and ensure children could participate in all aspects of the service. Staff observed children to inform their next steps in learning and used developmental trackers to ensure children were progressing well. They identified gaps in learning and put strategies in place to ensure children's learning needs were met.

## How good is our setting?

**5 - Very Good**

### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

The service was warm, welcoming and inclusive. There was a positive ethos that reflected a sense of belonging and it was evident that children were placed at the centre of the service. Families were welcomed in to the service and spent time talking with staff and the manager in the foyer during drop off and pick up times. This sent a strong message that children mattered.

The display walls were well presented, with natural material and small wooden discs that depicted the service's values. Children's voices and experiences were captured in their comments that were placed next to each value. Children's achievements were displayed and the family feedback wall reflected comments from families about their involvement in the service, including quality time spent playing with their children.

Children had access to a rich learning environment that provided them with high quality learning

experiences. The playrooms were well designed and learning areas were defined. Children moved between the playrooms which meant they could transfer and extend their learning in different ways. This helped children consolidate their learning.

The exciting outdoor play area was accessible and allowed children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas when they chose. The spaces were well defined and included risky play, a cycling area and a tree swing to help promote children's physical development. The well-resourced mud kitchen, walk-in sand pit and large digging area supported children's imaginative and creative skills. An enclosed playhouse meant that children could sit inside and role play, draw and paint. This meant that children were having fun learning outdoors.

Children had access to local services within their community, including the library, parks and beaches. Regular visits to a supported living residence enabled children to make social connections with older adults. They took books, puzzles and games to play together, making strong connections to support intergenerational relationships.

Visitors were welcomed in to the service such as the police and local musicians. The musicians played different instruments for the children and encouraged them to sing-a-long to nursery rhymes and asked them to recognise theme tunes from children's movies. This meant that children's learning experiences were extended through community participation.

## How good is our leadership?

**5 - Very Good**

### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service aimed to provide a warm, secure and nurturing environment in which children felt safe, comfortable and happy. The vision was developed in consultation with families and the mantra, 'Where Play is out of this world' was agreed. This meant that families were meaningfully involved in influencing the service.

The service had formed strong relationships with families and they were encouraged to spend time chatting with other families. Information was exchanged between families and staff about the children's day and we observed children joining in on the conversations. Monthly newsletters and digital methods helped ensure families were informed of up and coming events and current developments within the service.

There was a clear focus on involving families in their children's learning within the service and at home. Families were encouraged to spend time in the service, participating in stay, play and learn and bookbug sessions, as well as family fun Friday. Story sacks supported families to provide fun opportunities to enhance their children's literacy and numeracy skills. A toddler group was set up to help integrate families in to the service and support their children's learning through play. This meant that families were meaningfully involved in their children's learning.

Learning conversations were scheduled every term to invite families to discuss and comment on their children's progress and view their child's personal learning journey. We spoke with families during the

inspection and their feedback was very positive. They commented on how well their children were progressing and that they enjoyed being involved in the various activities on offer.

The service was led well. The head teacher and manager worked well together to ensure children received a high quality service. The manager led and shared developments across the local authority and was instrumental in leading best practice in collaboration with external agencies. For example, they identify innovative strategies tailored towards children's individual support needs. This meant that children received the right support at the right time.

Quality assurance processes were in place and a culture of continuous improvement and self-evaluation was evident. The detailed improvement plan set out priorities to further develop the service and staff were leading some of the developments. There was a commitment to involving families through consultation and feedback and a specific focus on language, communication and numeracy. The service was aspirational for all children and wanted them to reach their own potential.

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

### 4.3 Staff deployment

Staff knew children very well and had formed positive and trusting relationships with them. They sat with children at their level and joined in with their play to help keep them engaged in the learning. They had fun with children and interacted with them in a playful manner. As a result, children benefitted from a committed team.

There was a clear commitment to promoting children's rights. Staff spoke with children in a calm and respectful manner and asked for permission to help them and gave them plenty of time to make their decisions. They listened to children and supported their choices and preferences. Staff valued children's right to play and provided endless opportunities and experiences for children to learn through play. As a result, children were happy, confident and independent learners.

Staff worked well together to ensure children's learning needs were well supported. They shared information about children's learning and development and tracked children's progress as a team. They discussed children's development and ensured all children received the support they needed. This meant that children were progressing well.

Staff were deployed in all areas of the service to ensure children's safety. They used walkie talkies to communicate messages and inform each other of children's movements, for example, when children left the indoor area to go outdoors. They communicated well during transition times including lunchtime and at the end of the day, when children were preparing to go home.

There were ongoing opportunities for staff to keep up to date with current practice and further develop their skills and knowledge. Staff were committed to their professional development and willingly undertook

champion roles to extend their skills and contribute to the development of the service. This helped improve outcomes for children.

Staff knew how to safeguard children. We spoke with the team and they understood their roles and responsibilities to protect children if they were concerned about their health, safety and wellbeing. This helped ensure children were safe.

Families told us that they were very happy with the staff team and that their children were thriving at the service. They felt valued and had trusting relationships with staff and knew they could speak with them if they needed to share information. One family commented, ' My child loves coming here and I can't believe the change in them. It is great to see how much they have come on'.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).



## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very 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

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