

# Green Apple Nursery Carluke Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
24 May 2024

**Service provided by:**  
Green Apple Nursery Ltd

**Service provider number:**  
SP2012011873

**Service no:**  
CS2019375019

## About the service

Green Apple Nursery Carluke is registered to provide care to a maximum of 81 children aged from birth to those not yet attending primary school. Fifty six children were attending on the first day of our inspection and 18 on the second day.

The service is located in a detached two storey property, situated in the town centre of Carluke, South Lanarkshire. Local amenities such as shops, parks and a library are close by.

Children receive care within four playrooms, separated by their age and stage of development. Secure garden spaces are accessible for all age groups to use.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between the 22 May 2024 and 24 May 2024. The 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 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 received views from 25 of their parents/carers
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

**Key messages**

- Children attending the service were happy, settled and comfortable in the care of staff.
- Staff and families were well connected, working positively together to meet children's needs.
- Play experiences were fun, interesting and promoted children's progression in learning.
- The premises was welcoming and well maintained, helping children feel like they mattered.
- Staff were committed to providing children with high quality care, play and learning.
- Children's voices were heard, ensuring they felt respected and valued.

**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

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 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children attending the service were settled, happy and confident. They had strong connections with staff who knew them well and were responsive to their individual needs. Lots of cuddles, tickles, laughter, singing and chatter ensured children felt loved and special. Many families commented on the nurturing care their children received. One parent said, "my child is loved and you can see this through the way staff talk to them, I know their voice is heard." Others added that care was "child centred", that their child was "shown love and acceptance" and "made to feel wanted."

Staff worked closely with families to involve them in their child's care. Parents and carers were warmly welcomed into the service, strengthening trusting relationships between each child, their family and the staff. There were plenty of opportunities for meaningful conversations that supported meeting children's needs. These included, at collection time and during special nursery events such as a stay and play sessions. Children said, "I like it when my mummy comes into nursery to play with me" and "my dad stayed at nursery one day, it was so good."

Overall, personal plans supported staff to meet children's needs. Each plan contained useful information about children's health, wellbeing and safety needs. Meaningful conversations with families were reflected too, ensuring all those caring for children were aware of changes to their needs and significant events in their lives. Many plans detailed clearly how children's needs would be met, but others could be further developed to ensure children are consistently supported to achieve. The manager agreed to review these as part of their quality assurance processes.

Children's emotional and social development was supported through close friendships with peers. Staff helped children to be sensitive to their friends and worked with them to identify and cope with their emotions. Strategies such as deep breathing, learning to compromise and talking about feelings helped children to manage minor disputes and refocus positively on play. One child told us, "I have lots of friends here, in fact they are all my friends" and some parents commented, "they enjoy playing with their friends" and "the opportunity children have to socialise with peers is a real strength."

The service placed themselves at the heart of the local community. They engaged in community events such as the annual gala day and visited local amenities, including the food bank, parks and library. This meant that children were developing a sense of belonging and were growing in confidence as they were included and engaged with others. One child told us, "it's so exciting that we are in the gala, I think we might win." Another commented, "it's just fun at the gala, we are going to dress up with our mum's and gran's and everyone that lives in Carluke."

Children experienced relaxed and sociable mealtimes. They had the opportunity to chat with friends in an unhurried environment. Staff supported children to be independent and supervised them closely when eating to ensure their safety. Meals and snacks were nutritious and met children's dietary needs. Water was accessible at all times to ensure children were hydrated and healthy.

Children commented positively on their eating experience. They said, "my soup was so yummy", "see if you don't like the lunch, you just need to tell the ladies and they will get you something else" and "you can get a drink whenever you want, the cups are always there."

Staff understood the importance of sleep for children's overall development. Routines were responsive to children's needs, creating good sleep habits. Children slept comfortably and safely in cots and day beds and were supervised by staff for their safety. Gentle music, dimmed lighting and the use of children's individual comforters provided a nurturing sleep experience for children where they felt secure.

Medication was stored and administered safely to support children's health and wellbeing. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of children's individual medical needs and worked with families to keep children safe.

### **Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning**

The relaxed pace of the day was centred round children's needs and choices. This meant that there was plenty time for play and learning. Children were able to develop their ideas and explore their curiosities without disruption. Play was deep and meaningful, supporting children to progress their skills and knowledge.

Children were stimulated through a mixture of developmentally appropriate free-play and adult led experiences. Particular favourites included, building towers and landmarks, creating food with playdough and caring for babies in the home role play area. Families and children commented positively about the range of play experiences available. One parent said, "lots of great experiences are provided" and another added, "my children are engaged and love the different types of play." Children happily shared, "I love playing, it's my favourite" and "you can just play all day."

Staff matched children's energy during play. They brought excitement and fun as they played alongside children and supported them to solve problems. Children shrieked with delight when staff chased them and role played imaginatively with them. Staff sensitively asked questions and initiated conversations about size, shape and counting. This challenged children's thinking, helping to progress their learning.

The inclusion of children's ideas and interests meant that play was exciting, fun and engaging. Staff adapted their plans to meet children's needs and were responsive to their requests for particular experiences. The original plan for den building at the woods was overturned when children suggested playing physical and imaginative superhero games. Children excitedly told us, "I was playing spiderman and dinosaurs" and laughed as they said "I was puffed out in the woods with all that running, it's lucky I'm healthy."

The youngest children benefited from lots of opportunities to discover and be curious about the world around them. They explored using all of their senses as they formed connections in their brains. They especially liked water play and giggled and smiled as they poured water from little pots and tubs. Balance and confidence was developing as staff supported children to take their first steps with walkers and pull along toys.

Children's literacy development was supported through songs and stories. Welcoming book areas provided the perfect space to cosy up and read familiar stories. Children told us about their favourite books and also made up their own stories using puppets, story pebbles and spoons. Song bags further helped children to develop language. The bags contained props that generated interest in singing. The babies particularly enjoyed singing "five little speckled frogs" with staff.

Play provided lots of opportunities for children to develop the fine muscles in their wrists, hands and fingers. Experiences such as squeezing playdough and picking up tiny pieces of spaghetti helped children develop this skill, putting them in good stead for controlling a pencil for writing and drawing. Lots of mark making materials were available and children created detailed pictures and practiced writing the letters of their name.

Children's progress in learning was shared with families through an online app. Involving parents and carers in their child's learning recognises them as their child's primary carer and enables them to continue supporting development at home. Almost all parents were satisfied with the quality of their child's play and learning. One parent commented, "we feel like all educational needs are being met and we are regularly updated with progress through the observations on the app."

## How good is our setting?

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 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were cared for in a welcoming, homely and nurturing environment where they were made to feel like they mattered. Natural light flooded upstairs playrooms and looking windows on the roof terrace encouraged children to peek out to see what was happening in the town. The nursery was very well maintained and attention to detail meant that each area was developed to meet children's needs. The premises was freshly decorated and displays of children's work and experiences valued their achievements. Parents agreed and commented, "the indoor and outdoor spaces are really welcoming" and "I like that the nursery is bright, clean and welcoming."

Cosy spaces were accessible to children across the service to support their wellbeing. Homely touches such as couches, soft furnishings, lamps and twinkling lights ensured children felt able to relax and feel emotionally secure. Older children particularly enjoyed swinging in the hammock on the roof terrace. One child said "I love this hammock, it's so zen."

The recent addition of a sensory "zen den" provided space for children who needed it to feel calm in a quiet space. This helped children to regulate emotions and promoted feelings of safety. The room had been carefully designed to include sensory equipment such as moving lights and textured fabrics, contributing to a calming experience for children.

Outdoor areas were well used to support children's play and learning. Staff took a positive approach to being outside and demonstrated an understanding of the benefits of fresh air and exercise on children's wellbeing. On the first day of this inspection the rain was particularly heavy, but children and staff dressed in waterproof clothing, went outdoors and had fun with water.

Regular visits to the woods helped children to connect to nature, understand the importance of caring for the environment and be inspired by the world around them. Many families expressed their delight about children playing and learning in the woods. They said, "my child has thoroughly enjoyed going out to the forest" and "my child really loves to go to the woods and learn about nature."

Children's learning was supported through access to high quality developmentally appropriate play materials. These included lots of natural wooden and metal objects which encouraged children to be curious and creative. One child playing with wooden circles imaginatively said, "this one is a tomato, this one is a cookie. It's all food I'm making." This demonstrates the value of including open ended materials in play.

Toys and materials were stored on low level shelving and baskets, making them accessible to children. This meant that children could see what was available, enabling them to make choices about their play. Many children transported objects across playrooms to develop their ideas. Staff carefully considered how resources were presented to children. Play materials were displayed in ways that encouraged children to touch, explore and imagine. For example, hiding toys in dens, organising sensory items in treasure baskets and storing pencils and paint brushes in interesting wooden containers.

A variety of measures were in place to keep children safe. These included, stair gates, safe storage of hazardous materials and good maintenance of the property. Children were fully involved in assessing their own safety through implementation of the Care Inspectorate's SIMOA campaign. SIMOA is an elephant character that encourages staff never to forget about children's safety. The service had introduced a soft toy version of SIMOA to the children and used it to facilitate discussions about safety. This had generated some fabulous reflections from children about the importance of road safety and staying close to staff. Children's comments included, "you look left and right" and "you need to stay on the pavement and walk next to the wall."

Infection control practices promoted a safe environment for children and families. These included, daily cleaning of premises, regular handwashing and providing hygienic nappy changing facilities.

## 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 service had developed a set of values and aims in consultation with families. The vision of providing a home from home environment where children were nurtured and had fun was reflected in practice. Children were very happy with the way the service was delivered. They said, "I like coming to nursery" and, "Green Apple, Carluke is the best." Many parents and carers agreed. One commented, "we are happy with the care provided and would recommend Green Apple Carluke to friends."

Children's feelings and communications were responded to, ensuring their rights were upheld. This was observed in daily practice where children had the choice about where and what they wanted to play with. When staff identified play spaces were not being well utilised, they involved children in changing them. Recent consultations with children about the home area and garden had led to positive changes that had improved their quality of play and learning. Children were listened to and empowered to ask for developments. One child shared, "we asked for new things in the home area and we got them", another added, "I asked to play football and we could."

Staff had a strong voice in developing the service. They were familiar with best practice guidance and used it to reflect on the quality of children's experiences. This helped them to identify what was going well and what needed to improve to secure positive outcomes for children. Recent reflections on children's participation had contributed to strengthening responsive care.

The culture of continuous improvement was reflected in peer observations and regular staff supervision meetings with management. Each staff member had a clear professional development goal. They showed commitment to ongoing learning and could confidently show us how training had impacted on improvements to children's experiences. This was particularly relevant to the development of high quality outdoor play.

The views of families were actively sought to inform the development of the service. A suggestions basket, questionnaires and informal discussions meant that parents could provide their views in a variety of ways. Families were kept well informed of changes as management responded to feedback in newsletters. A recent example of this was improving the signing in system for children to ensure they were accounted for. Families told us, "parents are regularly asked for feedback of events and improvements" and "we are always being asked for input and the newsletter keeps us updated."

A quality assurance calendar provided a framework for continually evaluating the quality of the service. Audits of areas such as infection control, recruitment, accidents and play ensured that children's care, safety and welfare was continually improving.

The service worked well with other professionals to reflect on and improve practice for children. They had strong connections with external agencies from health, social work and education. One professional told us, "I feel that Green Apple Nursery work very well with families and other agencies to support the children in their care."

## 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

Staff were passionate about their role of caring for children. This was reflected in the high quality care, play and learning they provided to children. Families highlighted the staff team as a key strength of the service and described staff as being, friendly, caring, attentive, welcoming and positive. Children agreed and told us, "I like my lady" and "my teachers are good."

Many core members of staff had remained in post since the nursery had opened. This provided consistency for children and enabled strong trusting relationships with families. Several parents agreed and one commented, "I like that I often see the same faces, they take time to speak with me at drop off and pick up." When new staff did join the team, parents were well informed through introductions in newsletters and on the nursery app. Regular "get to know the staff" posts helped new families develop an understanding of who was caring for their child. Children knew the names of all staff caring for them and were confident to approach them for support.



Families were aware of what to expect from staff caring for their child. The manager had shared revised Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) codes of practice with them so that they were familiar with expected staff conduct. The SSSC are the regulatory body responsible for registering the social services workforce. They provide public protection by promoting high standards of conduct and practice and support the development of those registered with them.

Staff were well deployed across the day to meet children's needs. They had time to play with children and to attend to their care needs. Staff supervised children well to ensure their safety. When extra support was needed to meet a specific care need, help was provided from management or staff in other rooms. A few parents told us that they would like to see more staff working at the service, but most families felt their children's needs were met. One parent commented, "there are always enough staff in my child's playroom" and another added, "my child's needs are always met to ensure they are happy and healthy."

Staff communicated well to ensure that children's needs were met. Systems such as, walkie talkies and daily communication diaries meant that important information was shared with relevant people. Additionally, an online app promoted fast and effective two-way communication with families regarding children's needs. Most families commented positively on communication from staff. One parent said, "The girls are so kind and inviting. If I have any issues or questions they are very helpful to assist. It is easy to directly contact them because of the app which is very useful if you have forgotten to tell or ask them something."

There was a mixture of skills and knowledge across the team. New staff were well supported by more experienced staff. Mentoring and induction programmes helped to develop staff understanding of their role and how to provide high quality care to children.

## 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 ensure that children are protected from harm, the manager and provider should make sure that children receive care in a safe and clean environment.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: "My environment is secure and safe" (HSCS 5.19) and "I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment" (HSCS 5.24).

**This area for improvement was made on 5 July 2023.**

#### Action taken since then

At this inspection we found that children received care in a safe and clean environment. This meant that they were protected from harm.

This area for improvement is met.

## 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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