

# Dalbeattie Playgroup Day Care of Children

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DALBEATTIE  
DG5 4EX

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
21 January 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Dalbeattie Playgroup

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003002549

**Service no:**  
CS2003010852

## About the service

Dalbeattie Playgroup is a daycare of children service provided by Dalbeattie Playgroup Management committee. The service is located in a community building in the town of Dalbeattie, which has been suitably converted for use. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 22 children, not yet attending primary school at any one time, no more than 3 are aged under 2 years; no more than 7 are aged 2 years to under 3 years and no more than 12 are aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school full time.

The service has a baby room and one large open-plan playroom with direct access to an enclosed outdoor area. This provides opportunities for a variety of outdoor play experiences. The service is located within a housing estate with access to local amenities and public transport.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 20 January 2025 between 10:00 and 15:45 and 21 January 2025 between 9:30 and 15:30. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. 17 children attended on the first day of inspection and 19 on the second day. 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 six of their families
- spoke with six staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed and sampled documents
- spoke with visiting professionals.

## Key messages

- Children were happy, safe and secure
- Children were supported by staff who knew them well
- Staff were kind, caring and nurturing
- Children were leading their own play
- Staff supported children's play and learning
- The service had made significant improvements
- The manager had developed positive leadership skills
- Families were happy with the quality of the service
- The service should continue to improve the quality of the service.

## 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 this key question as good as there were a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### Quality indicator 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were happy, safe and secure in the care of staff who knew them well. Staff had formed positive relationships with children and were responsive to their emotional and wellbeing needs. When children needed comfort or reassurance, staff were kind, caring and nurturing, ensuring their needs were met. This helped children feel safe and secure.

Staff interacted with children in a warm and calm manner. They listened to children and respected their choices and wishes, for example, asking children for permission to help with their personal care. Staff recognised children's achievements and supported them to try new challenges by providing praise and encouragement. This supported children's confidence and self-esteem.

Overall, mealtimes were a relaxed, unhurried sociable experience for children. Meals were transported in to the service and children were offered an alternative if needed. Younger children joined the older children for lunch which provided a social and interactive experience. Children were served their main meals and encouraged to self-serve their vegetables or salad and pour their own drinks. Staff sat with children and enjoyed the opportunity to talk about their morning. We asked the service to continuously review the quality of the lunch time experience for all children. After lunch, children were encouraged to brush their teeth. This helped promote children's independence and healthy lifestyle choices.

Staff understood the importance of sleep and rest for children's overall development and wellbeing. Younger children had access to a separate sleep room which was located within the main play room. It was quiet, cosy and comfortable with soft lighting. Staff were able to check on children at regular intervals and record sleep times and children's routine. This contributed to children's emotional wellbeing.

Personal plans reflected children's needs, interests and preferences. Health and wellbeing indicators were used to monitor children's progress and were regularly reviewed with families. The plans linked to children's learning experiences and they were well documented. This meant that children's overall development was well supported.

Children's rights to privacy and dignity were respected. For example, the manager had made provision in the children's toilets for children who needed support from staff with their personal care. This meant that children felt valued.

We evaluated this key question as good as there were a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### 1.2 Play and learning

Children were having fun with their friends and engaged in their play. They had a range of play opportunities throughout the day to investigate and explore the learning environment. Children told us that they were

happy at the service and that their favourite activities were playing outdoors and dancing. This meant that children were involved in play that was meaningful to them.

Staff clearly understood the importance of child led play and that children were active learners. Children were independent and led their play and learning. Staff supported children and ensured they had ample resources to sustain their interests and allowed children to extend their ideas. Staff observed children and stood back and guided them appropriately, for example when taking small risks on the physical apparatus. This enabled children to learn about how to keep themselves safe.

Staff joined in with children's play, for example they played musical games and were actively using their bodies to jump, skip and freeze. Children enjoyed the experience and were having fun, laughing and learning to keep up with the instructions. Staff also spent quality time with small groups of children at the puzzle and games area. This provided children with positive learning experiences, for example sorting and matching objects.

There were good opportunities for children to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy. Interest tables were set up for children to explore specific resources such as scales to weigh different objects and a range of writing tools to practice their mark making skills. Children were also learning about the human body. Staff resourced an area with x ray images, baby scans and a skeleton diagram to spark children's curiosity. This helped promote children's language development and extend their knowledge.

Staff observed children's learning and development. They recorded children's interests and were beginning to write more detailed and meaningful observations that reflected children's learning and identify their next steps. Training has been sourced through the local authority to support all staff to record and provide more robust personal learning plans. This will help improve outcomes for children.

## How good is our setting?

### 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good as there were a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

#### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities.

The service was warm, welcoming and inviting. It was well ventilated with plenty of natural light and space for children to access the learning areas. The building was safe and controlled by a security entry system. Children had access to individual coat pegs and shoe boxes for their personal belongings. Wall displays were low and children's art work was well presented. This contributed to children's sense of belonging and sent a message that children matter.

Children accessed the large enclosed outdoor play area from the main playroom which enabled them to move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas. Children's boots and jackets were accessible which meant they were able to change their clothes independently. This helped promote children's confidence and self-esteem.

Children were having fun outdoors. They made 'fairy soup' by mixing water, glitter, acorns and leaves together with small twigs. They revisited the activity several times and were adding new ideas to their

stories and talking about the 'ingredients'. Staff encouraged children to use their imaginative skills. This meant that children were learning through play and exploring their ideas.

The service had worked well to improve the learning environment to ensure children had access to a range of open-ended resources and play equipment. The large playroom was well set up and play areas were well defined to reflect children's interests and stages of development. Children were using the areas well and they were able to choose from a good selection of materials, for example in the arts and craft area. This meant that children could choose where they wanted to play and select their own resources.

The quiet room was accessible at different times during the day. Children were playing with sensory resources and exploring the light projections, different sized mirrors and wall puzzles. We asked the service to allow children continuous access to the room throughout the day. This will help support children's learning and wellbeing.

A small baby room was integrated within the main playroom. It was calm, cosy and intimate and well designed to meet children's age and stage of development. They had access to sensory play and natural materials which supported their learning through their senses. Appropriate sized climbing equipment promoted children's physical skills and supported their balance and co-ordination. This meant that young children were progressing well.

The service was continuing to remove some of the plastic equipment and where applicable replace it with more natural materials and resources. We asked the service to improve the lighting in the hallway and upgrade the staff toilets.

## How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good as there were a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The aims of the service were to provide a safe and stimulating environment in which all children felt happy and secure. The service endeavours to provide a safe place to play which supports the child to explore, discover, question and to create an awareness of their local environment. During the inspection, we observed happy children who were confident, secure and engaged in their play and learning. This meant that children were having fun playing through a curiosity approach to learning.

The management team and staff worked well together and with the support of the early years principal teacher, revamped the learning environment. An improvement plan outlined priorities to improve the outdoor space to include an undercover shelter for children to access during inclement weather, and a planting area. The outdoor area had been extended and staff were excited about the potential for new learning experiences.

The manager was transparent and acknowledged that the service had been on a significant journey of improvement. There was mutual respect between the manager and staff which helped increase levels of responsibility, expectations and accountability. Staff told us they felt supported by the manager and that the

team was committed to providing a quality service and motivated to continue to improve the service. This contributed to a positive ethos within the team.

The manager had reflected on the quality of the service and recognised that they needed to understand their role and responsibility as a manager and how to lead the staff team. This resulted in the manager undertaking a professional development award to learn about how to improve the quality of the service and inspire staff. This was evident during the inspection and the impact was noticeable.

The service was in the early stages of self-evaluation. We spoke with the manager who had plans to involve staff, children and families through ongoing consultation and use their feedback and suggestions about how to improve the quality of the service. Other strategies included the introduction of 'You said, we did' board which was accessible at the main entrance.

The manager monitored all aspects of the service including reviewing children's personal plans and their health and wellbeing needs including the safe administration of medication. A monitoring calendar provided the manager with a complete overview of the service and helped identify gaps in service delivery and improvements. Some risk assessments and policies need reviewed to reflect current practice and guidance. This will help improve outcomes for children.

To minimise disruption during the lunch time routine, the manager spoke with families who pick up and collect their children at noon. It was agreed that families would use the side entrance to help transition times and ensure lunch time is uninterrupted. This will help improve the service.

We spoke with several families during the inspection and they told us that they were happy with the service and that their children were progressing well. They spoke highly of the staff team and their relationships with their children. To further strengthen relationships with families, we signposted the service to the care inspectorate practice note, Me, my family and my childcare setting.

## How good is our staff team?

**4 - Good**

We evaluated this key question as good as there were a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

### 4.3 Staff deployment

Staff knew children well. They had formed positive relationships with children and families. They were responsive and caring towards children and they were committed to ensuring children's needs were well supported and met. As a result, children experienced good quality care and support.

The team was well established and they worked well together. They supported each other and shared responsibilities. They communicated well with each other and ensured continuity of care for all children. This was evident during staff changeover time for the afternoon session in the baby room. Staff discussed the morning routine and shared information about children's care, play and learning. This helped ensure children's needs were well supported.

Regular staff meetings were held to ensure staff exchanged information about children's care, play and learning needs. This meant that all staff were aware of children's individual needs and were able to contribute to children's next steps in their learning.

Staff had undertaken 'champion roles' to plan, develop and resource different play areas including the outdoor area. They researched how to improve the learning areas and developed action plans. The action plans outlined how children would benefit from child led play experiences and learning. Children were involved in developing the areas and their ideas and interests were evident. This helped improve outcomes for children.

Staff were continuing to develop their skills in extending children's learning through open ended questions. They supported children to problem solve and make decisions. Further training opportunities on child development, theory and practice will support staff to provide high quality play and learning experiences. We signposted the service to the care inspectorate practice note, 'Growing my potential'. This will help ensure staff continue to develop their skills and knowledge when working with babies and young children.

Staff wellbeing was an important aspect of the service. Staff had the option to work flexible hours to support work life balance. They were allocated two hours per week to complete their paperwork to ensure children's records were up-to-date. This contributed to positive staff morale and high levels of staff retention and attendance.

We spoke with staff during the inspection and they were all committed to providing quality experiences and outcomes for children. They were happy with the progress the service had made since the last inspection and were motivated and willing to continue on their journey of improvement. This meant that children benefited from a team that was committed to improving the quality 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](http://www.careinspectorate.com).



Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - 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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