

# Locharbriggs Nursery Day Care of Children

Locharbriggs Primary School  
Locharbriggs  
Dumfries  
DG1 1UW

Telephone: 01387 710 241

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
1 May 2025

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

**Service provider number:**  
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**Service no:**  
CS2003015496

## About the service

Locharbriggs Nursery is a daycare for children service, registered for a maximum of 32 children at any one time aged from three years to those not yet attending primary school. The service is located within Locharbriggs Primary School, which is in a residential area of Dumfries.

Children are cared for in a bright spacious environment which has easy access to a large and interesting outdoor play area, which provides them with a wide variety of opportunities to enjoy being outdoors.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 29 April 2025 and Wednesday 30 April 2025. Feedback was given on Thursday 1 May 2025. 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 members of their families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Confident, happy children who are cared for by kind and welcoming staff, who know them well and use their knowledge to support children and families effectively.
- Well-resourced, popular outdoor area which offers children a wide variety of opportunities to learn and enjoy being outside.
- An inclusive environment, with staff and children working together to keep safe and have fun.
- Strong leadership team with a focus on ensuring that everyone has the best possible experience and developing leadership within their team.

## 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?	5 - Very 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

### 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 and families were warmly welcomed to the setting by a kind, friendly and nurturing staff team. Staff engaged with parents and children respectfully. They were interested in children's wellbeing and actively listened to both children and parents. Children's achievements were praised and they were included in the life of the nursery, for example by being helpful and by caring for one another. This meant that children settled quickly into nursery and trusted the adults caring for them. We heard confident children, able to share ideas, make suggestions and ask for help when they needed it.

Parents told us: "Everyone is very welcoming. Easy to speak to. Always answer any questions I may have. We have a great relationship with the staff and easy to go to if we have a problem".

Staff got to know children and their families during the supportive settling period. This was done in a way that was sensitive to the individual needs of children and parents and included the other settings children attended. Parents were well informed about the setting and knew what to expect. Parents told us how much they valued the information shared on an online learning platform.

All children had personal care plans, which were based on the wellbeing indicators. These provided staff with the information they needed to meet children's needs. We found that management and staff had already identified what they needed to do to improve these so that there was clear information about what the strategies were for supporting all children. Where appropriate, individual risk assessments were in place which ensured that those children with additional needs were supported effectively. Parents confirmed that "We have care plan meetings regularly and know what is happening with our child".

Children were offered a variety of healthy and tasty meals and we could see that they enjoyed their food. Staff respected family choices and were very aware of children's dietary requirements and personal preferences. This meant that they had developed ways of serving foods which ensured that children received the right food for them. Mealtimes had recently been reviewed and a number of changes had been made, we discussed different ways of improving this further, including enabling more children to be independent at mealtimes and ensuring that all children have the same quality of experience across the meal.

Our visit was made on a sunny, warm day and we found that staff actively encouraged children to wear hats and suncream. Children who wanted to do this for themselves were supported to do so. Children were clearly aware of the importance of drinking water throughout the day and were good at taking their water bottles with them.

### 1.3 Play and learning

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Children were having fun as they played. Children played together very well, using their imaginations and co-operating with one another. Staff provided children with a variety of opportunities to be curious, solve problems and work out what was happening in their lives, for example we observed children role play at schools with one child ably taking on the part of teacher.

There was a wide range of resources to support children's learning and development, and staff were developing these so that children had more opportunities to develop skills like numeracy in all areas of the setting. Staff encouraged children to talk for a variety of purposes and they responded well to children, supporting them to develop their vocabulary and confidence. We saw children using books independently and that literacy was beginning to become evident throughout the whole setting, for example with the addition of recipe cards to the playdough area. Children's physical development was well supported, particularly outdoors where children were learning how to ride bikes and climb trees. Children were learning about their environment and how to care for it, and we observed that most children chose to be outdoors for the majority of the time.

Staff had made a good start to developing the way they planned for children's learning. They were using their online learning app to record their observations and to keep parents informed about their child's progress. We discussed this with the management team and agreed that staff will benefit from planned training to support them in making their observations even more meaningful and relevant to children's learning needs and interests. Whilst staff did talk to children, we agreed that they should continue to develop confidence in their use of higher order thinking skills, which will support children to problem solve and think creatively.

Big books provided a lovely record of what children had been doing and these were available for parents to see. We could see that these were evolving as a planning tool and we agreed that these should continue to develop so that they show more clearly where ideas come from and are evaluated to inform children's next steps better. Children enjoyed showing us their big book and we agreed that this format would be useful for showing how children are involved in planning their own learning more clearly.

Children were a part of the whole school community and joined in with different activities like assemblies. This helped children to become familiar with the building and the other people there and supported their transition into school. Parents were welcomed into the setting every day and there were events like a picnic so that they felt included.

Parents told us that the children "learn at their own place learn new things everyday" and "my child is always happy, likes snack and lunchtime, outside play in the sandpit and puzzles".

## How good is our setting?

## 5 - Very Good

### 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 being cared for in a welcoming, spacious and bright environment which provided them with a wide variety of play opportunities. The layout of the furnishings, toys and materials enabled children to make choices about their day. The setting was clean with no clutter, resources were all accessible to children and were in good condition. Generally children could free flow to a range of resources outside and inside for most of the day.

Children were very active outdoors, where they could dig, play in water, ride bikes and climb trees. As well as their enclosed area, the wider playground was used for sports activities and obstacle courses. We agreed that the bike area could be further developed to make it safer by organising the bikes and creating a traffic system.

Children were being cared for in a safe and secure environment. Access to the building was controlled and monitored. Registers and sign-in sheets meant that staff knew who was in the building and visitor ID was checked on arrival. The room was well ventilated and the blinds were effective in protecting indoors from the sun. There were shady areas outdoors and the hut was a cool shady area which was well used during our visit.

Children were learning about keeping themselves safe. They had talked about the wellbeing indicators and the Care Inspectorate's SIMOA campaign. SIMOA is a purple elephant which encourages settings to think about safety. These conversations had involved the children in creating the rules, for example they had to tell an adult whenever they went to the toilet. Children also helped staff to carry out daily checks and risk assessments which enabled them to think about keeping themselves and their friends safe.

Appropriate procedures for controlling infection were in place, and suitable handwashing facilities were available in the playroom. We observed that children and staff were following good handwashing practices. An appropriate space was provided for nappy changing, and we agreed that this could be brightened up. Toilets were easily accessible and would benefit from reminders to flush the toilet and wash hands.

Improving the environment had been a focus area for the staff team and they plan to continue to reflect on and develop the outdoor space and the cosy space indoors.

## How good is our leadership?

**5 - Very Good**

### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

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 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 due for review with parents and children later this year. There had been changes in the leadership of the setting in the last year and management and staff were open and honest about their journey.

A meaningful improvement plan had been developed, based on observation, and feedback from children, staff and families. The new manager has usefully spent her time getting to know her team and the setting before starting to make changes. Plans for improvement were realistic about timescales and who needed to be involved to make change happen. The management team were visible in the setting and were well known to staff, children and parents.

Staff met regularly to formally reflect on their work, practice documents and self-evaluation. They were also using informal opportunities to talk about changes. Staff felt confident about voicing their opinions and were open to new ideas. Management of the setting were keen for staff to develop their leadership skills and take responsibility for different areas of the provision.

Self-evaluation was becoming embedded in the setting and different practice indicators had been used to

support the process including environmental rating scales. We have suggested other practice documents which might be helpful.

There was a systematic approach to monitoring which ensured that all areas will be reviewed over time. This included reviews of personal plans, stages of intervention to track children and accidents and incidents. A pictorial method for identifying trends had recently been introduced for reviewing accidents and incidents and already helped identify areas for improvement outdoors.

Parents' views were welcomed and different methods of inviting their opinions were offered, including a voting system and stay and play sessions. Parental involvement in the online platform was high and provided further opportunities for feedback. We suggested that management may find the use of QR codes helpful as a way of involving parents more.

## How good is our staff team?

**4 - Good**

### 4.3 Staff deployment

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Children were being cared for by a warm, caring and professional staff team. Staff engaged very well with the inspection process and worked with us openly and honestly. Staff told us that they felt well supported by each other and the management team. Parents told us "I think the amount of staff is adequate but if availability is given could do with a little more when required" and "Always welcomed at the door and if child doesn't want to go in staff give one to one time."

Staff were deployed appropriately throughout the day and this meant that there were the right number of staff available to meet children's needs. Staff observed what was happening in the setting and moved around to ensure that they were in the right place to support children, for example by going outside, playing games and reading stories. Staff responded well to children, we heard children telling staff "I've got an idea" which was listened to and acted upon. Children were able to ask questions and staff answered them in ways which were easy to understand and appropriate. This helps children to feel secure, valued and trust the adults caring for them.

The staff team were keen to learn and develop their practice. All members of staff were supported to attend training and learning events which enabled them to follow their interests and meet their professional registration requirements. Management and staff had identified areas which would benefit from training, for example observing children and learning opportunities had been planned. All staff had a confident knowledge and understanding of the correct procedures for safeguarding children.

Management valued their staff team and knew them well. They were keen to empower them to develop their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the children. Whilst formal performance reviews were planned for later this term, all staff had had individual support sessions to discuss their wellbeing. Staff were confident that they could talk to management about worries or concerns.

The setting is currently reliant on supply staff and have been working to make sure that the same people have been used to ensure consistency for children and parents. At the time of the inspection, recruitment was about to start and management told us about their plans for involving children in this process. We have

acknowledged that this has been a challenging time for staff and that they have worked hard to develop relationships and a strong sense of team in a short time.

## 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

The service should ensure that multi-disciplinary support meetings for children's planned care consistently review and record children's progress in relation to any previously determined short-term targets.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that as a child:

'My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met.' (HSCS 1.23); and 'Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective.' (HSCS 1.24).

**This area for improvement was made on 9 June 2020.**

#### Action taken since then

Staff worked with parents and other professionals to plan for children's progress. Plans and targets were reviewed appropriately and within timescales.

### 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

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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?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

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

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