

St. Teresas Nursery Day Care of Children

St. Teresa's Primary School
Lochside Road
Dumfries
DG2 0DY

Telephone: 01387 255 732

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
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Service provided by:
Dumfries & Galloway Council

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2003015539

About the service

St Teresa's Nursery is located within St Teresa's Primary School, Lochside, Dumfries. The service is provided by Dumfries and Galloway Council.

The service is based within a large room within St Teresa's Primary School. Children can access a garden area for outdoor play and learning. Children also have opportunities to use other areas of St Teresa's Primary School campus, including the gym hall and grounds.

It is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 36 children aged three years to those not yet attending primary school. During the operating times, the service will have the exclusive use of the nursery room on the premises of St Teresa's Primary School and the adjacent outdoor play area.

The service is based in Newbridge, Dumfries and is easily accessible by foot and car and is near to local bus routes.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Wednesday 23 and Thursday 24 April 2025.

The inspection was carried out by one Early Learning and Childcare 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 10 people using the service and 10 of their parents and carers
- spoke with four staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

Key messages

- Strong partnership working with parents, who feel involved and included in their child's care and the life of the setting.
- Supportive staff team who know the children well and respond to them kindly and respectfully.
- Confident children who are caring and curious about the world around them.
- Reflective management and staff with a vision for the setting and for the children in their care.

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?	4 - 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?

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.

1.1 Nurturing care and support

Children were cared for by a friendly and kind staff team, who knew them and their families very well. Staff worked in partnership with families to ensure that children were supported to achieve and to have fun. Children were happy and confident and clearly trusted the staff which helped them to feel safe and secure in the setting. Parents told us "the staff make the time to get to know the parents & families of the children. They are very approachable and any issues are always sorted out quickly & effectively. Excellent communication between the school & home whether it's via email, verbal, text etc."

All children had personal plans which were based on information shared by parents and carers regularly, which meant that staff knew about the individual needs of children and any changes in their lives. Strategies were developed with parents and these supported staff to meet children's needs effectively.

Parental involvement is a key strength of the setting. Parents were welcomed in and had a variety of opportunities to have a say and be included in activities. Parents spoke very highly about the "Brew and Bleather" sessions which meant that they felt included and involved in their child's care. Parents told us "Staff always make time at the end of the day to discuss with parents any care, learning or play experience the children have had that day."

Staff were aware of the importance of a supportive transition and were working on providing information in different ways, for example staff and children were working on a video which could be shared with new parents. They were aware of the importance of supporting children to settle back into nursery routine following holidays and were looking at how they could support children moving onto school. We suggested that they could consider inviting new families to the Brew and Bleather over the summer term as part of this.

Snack and mealtimes were generally sociable occasions when staff encouraged children to chat and share their thoughts. Snacks were eaten within the nursery setting where were encouraged to be independent. Meals were served in the school dining hall, and children would benefit from more opportunities to be helpful and involved. All staff were aware of allergies and dietary preferences. Staff sat with children, role modelling good habits and enabling them to be independent. Children enjoyed their food.

Staff engaged with children very well. They praised them and comforted them appropriately. Children were good at sharing and cared for one another.

1.3 Play and Learning

Children were having fun as they enjoyed high quality play and learning experiences. We heard laughter and happy chat throughout our visit, as staff supported children to be curious, experiment and try things out for themselves. Children were keen to show us their learning stories and talked confidently about what they had been doing whilst in the setting.

Children were curious about the world around them and had a wide variety of opportunities to explore and investigate. During our walk, children became interested in what a woodpecker looks like and on their return used the computer to look for more information. A variety of resources were provided to support curiosity and creativity. We heard a child planning a trip to a beach in Italy and saw that she had worked out how to get there using a map. Staff supported this by providing materials to build a bus to get there. Children were encouraged to have a say and their opinions about their day were actively sought. Children were confident about expressing themselves and readily shared their opinions.

We observed that staff were good role models and very often lead the play, for example giving the children confidence to try out new things for themselves. Staff were inclusive in their approach and encouraged both children and parents to take part in games and activities.

We reviewed planning documents with the staff and children during our visit. These showed us that staff responded very well to children's interests and stages of development. Children's next steps were tracked so that everyone could see how each child was progressing. Floor books provided an informative record of what had been happening in the setting and we have suggested that these would be even better if they included more evaluative comments which would help staff plan for children's next steps in their learning.

The community was very well used both nearby and in the wider area. Children had opportunities to go for walks and visit places like the nearby care home and the beach. They also regularly had visitors to the nursery including students from the college who lead the children with active games and exercise.

Parents told us: "We are regularly updated about the next steps as well as being able to look through our child's learning folder any time we want for new updates. We can also communicate any issues we may be having with learning & they always try to help us with these issues."

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

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 in a welcoming, spacious and safe environment which provided them with a wide variety of play and learning opportunities. The layout of furnishings, toys and materials enabled children to make choices about most of their day.

Staff had continued to develop both the indoor and outdoor environments by reflecting on the layout of furniture. Staff were aware that aspects of the room were dated and tired and in need of refurbishment. Children were able to use a calm, restful area, which they called the den, for quiet times and chats. Active games and exercise were available outdoors as well as in the school gym hall. Children told us that they liked the new place for the mud kitchen and they enjoyed playing there.

The environment both indoors and outdoors was clean. Staff carried out daily health and safety checks. Infection control procedures were in place, and appropriate handwashing facilities were available in the playroom. We observed that many of the children were washing their hands without being told, which meant that they knew about good hygiene practice.

Children were not able to choose to go outside when they wanted to, although they could ask. Because of

the number of staff available, children could only go outside if everybody went. Whilst staff did move resources, like paint outside when needed, we have asked that as they continue to develop the outdoor environment, they make sure that children have the same opportunities for learning and development in both parts of the setting.

Children had opportunities to experience risky play outdoors and also on trips around the community and in the school hall. Children were encouraged to think about their own safety and assess risk for themselves, for example they knew how to cross the road safely. Children confidently talked about why head counts were needed when they were out and about and told us that they made sure that nobody was left behind. Staff were very aware of the risks when out and about and were vigilant all the time. During an outing, we saw that parents were involved in assessing risk and included in ensuring that all children were safe.

Procedures were in place to make sure that access to the building was controlled. External gates were secured and access to the nursery was passcode protected, with the button for leaving out children's reach. Children were supervised at all times and resources and activities meant that children were busy and engaged in their play. Parents were welcomed into the nursery both at the beginning and end of the day and procedures were in place which meant that staff knew when a child had been handed over.

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 and families were meaningfully involved in the service. Staff actively encouraged children to reflect and voice their opinions both about their day and the setting in general. This meant that children had the opportunity to be included in decisions which affected them. Staff used the Brew and Bleather sessions to involve parents in decisions and improvements in the setting. Discussions were recorded in a big book and parents also told us how well included they felt. Parents told us "the nursery has brew and bleather where parents have a cuppa and a chat with the staff they often ask our opinions and gets us involved with helping to improve the nursery, when nursery had funding for new toys they involved the children by asking them what toys they would like in the nursery".

There was a vision for the setting which laid out how children would learn and develop through play and be supported by staff. This has been reviewed within the last year by both staff and parents and a review date is in place for the future.

The staff team were fully involved in improvement planning and met regularly to reflect on what was happening in the nursery. Staff were encouraged to take on leadership roles and develop areas in the nursery for example the development of numeracy in the outdoor area.

An improvement plan was in place, which was based on effective quality assurance processes, feedback from children and families, professional development reviews and reviews of events like accidents and incidents. Self-evaluation was very well used within the service and a number of practice documents had been used to review what happens, for example environmental rating scales had been used to review the learning environment for children. We have suggested that other practice documents, for example the Care Inspectorate's Keeping children safe: supporting positive mealtime experiences in early learning and childcare may be helpful for supporting improvement.

How good is our staff team?**4 - Good****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 caring, committed and professional staff team. Across the team there was a wide mix of skills and experiences, which helped them to work together to meet children's needs effectively. Interactions between staff, children and parents were respectful, friendly and kind. Parents told us that they found staff "easy to talk to and voice concerns, they always make time if you need to contact them."

The staff team is well-established. They work together very well and are confident about questioning one another. Staff levels meant that there were times when opportunities for children were limited, for example they could not have free flow to the outdoors and finding time for tasks like recording observations was challenging. Parents told us "The children haven't been able to get out much this last year due to staffing & there have been occasions when nursery has had to close due to staffing." Staff were aware of the limitations placed on them and had put measures in place to help them, for example the use of walkie talkies and the rearrangement of fixtures like the garden shed enabled staff to observe children more effectively. Arrangements were also in place with the wider school so that additional support was available when needed.

Management of the setting knew their team well and supported them to develop their skills and interests. Support and supervision sessions were used as a way of checking in on staff wellbeing as they were needed. Annual reviews meant that they had the opportunity to reflect on their practice and identify areas they would like to focus on. Staff felt well supported both by their manager, their wider team and by parents. Staff were keen to learn and attended training whenever they could. Staff were aware of alternative ways of learning and enjoyed researching topics for the benefit of the 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 support children to have high quality play and learning experiences, the staff team should review the layout of the playroom and its resources to ensure they reflect the needs and stage of development of all children.

This is to ensure that the environment is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 'I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices' (HSCS 5.21).

This area for improvement was made on 9 October 2023.

Action taken since then

Staff were continuously reviewing the layout of the playroom and its resources to ensure that it is meeting the needs and interests of the children. They had used Early Childhood Environmental Ratings scales to evaluate how well the room was meeting children's needs and made adjustments, for example the development of more cosy, calm spaces where children could relax.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children's health and wellbeing, the provider should ensure that staffing levels and personal care procedures are sufficient to meet the needs of children.

This is to ensure that the environment is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states that: 3.15 'My needs are met by the right number of people' and 4.11 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.'

This area for improvement was made on 9 October 2023.

Action taken since then

There are sufficient staff to meet the needs of children however there are still times when the number of staff restricts children's choices, for example it is not possible to have free flow to the outdoors throughout the day. Where individual children have been identified as needing additional support this has been provided.

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?	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?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - 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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