

Sparklers Private Nursery Ltd

Day Care of Children

18 Greencroft Wynd
Annan
DG12 6BG

Telephone: 01461 206 060

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
4 July 2025

Service provided by:
Sparklers Private Nursery Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2004005096

Service no:
CS2007144673

About the service

Sparklers Annan Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 67 children at any one time, of whom there is a maximum of:

15 children birth - under two years,

20 children two - under three years,

32 children not yet attending primary school from age three upwards.

Other conditions of registration are:

Adult:child ratios will be a minimum of:

0-2 years - 1:3

2-3 years - 1:5

3 years and over 1:8 if the children attend more than 4 hours per day or

1:10 if the children attend for less than 4 hours per day.

During the operating times the service will have exclusive use of the nursery building. The service will be provided at 18 Greencroft Wynd, Annan, DG12 6BG.

The service is in partnership with the local authority to deliver preschool education.

The nursery operates from two floors, the lower providing space for under three year old's, with older children making use of the upper floor. Toilets and changing areas are on each floor, with a cooking kitchen on the upper floor.

It is conveniently situated in the centre of Annan, close to local shops, playparks and areas of interest like the museum.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 1 July and Wednesday 2 July 2025. Feedback was given on the afternoon of Friday 4 July 2025.

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from an Early Learning and Childcare team of 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 people using the service and members of their families, and we used information given in an online survey.
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents like personal plans, medication records and minutes of meetings.

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.

Key messages

- Happy, confident children who had formed secure attachments with staff.
- Parents welcomed from the start and involved in the setting and their child's care.
- Strong focus on local and wider community learning through daily walks, visits and community activities.
- Furnishings and room layout create a warm and calm environment.
- Children are taught to think about safety, supported by the use of SIMOA the elephant.
- Upstairs facilities need improvement; provider has agreed to make changes.
- Management and staff were positively engaged and committed to continuous improvement.
- Warm, caring, respectful and professional staff team who responded positively to children and encouraged them to have fun.

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?	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?**4 - Good****Quality Indicator 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 were cared for by a friendly, kind and supportive staff team. Building relationships with children and their families had been a key focus, enabling staff to understand individual needs and support each child's development well. Children appeared happy and confident in the setting. Staff interactions were warm, affectionate and nurturing, and secure attachments with key workers were observed. Children trusted staff and were confident sharing their worries.

Parents were welcomed into the nursery from the outset. Observations at handover times showed effective communication between staff and parents. Feedback from parents was very positive as they told us about how welcoming staff were and confirming their involvement in their child's care. Parents said, "I spent a couple of hours with staff completing the paperwork. They explained everything clearly and emphasised that I'm the parent, so my views matter".

All children had personal plans based on wellbeing indicators, completed in partnership with parents and reviewed at least every six months. Information from plans was summarised in a one-page profile for quick reference. Whilst the format gathered helpful information about children, we suggested that these would be improved by using more open-ended questions to encourage more detailed responses and by recording strategies more clearly to support continuity of care, especially for new or supply staff.

Children were offered a variety of healthy meals and snacks. Hot meals were provided by an external caterer, while snacks were planned in line with national healthy eating guidance. Children were involved in snack planning and shopping, promoting independence and life skills. Staff sat with children and supported them with eating, including cutting food and helping with cutlery use. We observed however that knives were not provided for children and that whilst older children poured their own drinks this was inconsistent. We have asked that this be reviewed to promote independence appropriately. Children were encouraged to sit while eating, reducing choking risks.

Staff responded sensitively to children's need for sleep. Sleep areas were appropriate and met children's needs. Staff understood the importance of monitoring sleeping children. We suggested that whilst out on walks, staff should consider different methods of recording sleep, as current methods were time-consuming and distracting.

Medication was stored correctly and we noted that records did not always include all of the information needed. We discussed this during the inspection and it was dealt with immediately.

Quality Indicator 1.3 Play and Learning

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Children were having fun as they played. We heard laughter and happy chat throughout our visit, as staff supported children to be curious, experiment and try things out for themselves. Parents told us that there is "A wide variety provided from growing their own food at an allotment to seeing the life cycle of a butterfly. Everything is always fun but there is a learning behind it."

Children were offered a wide range of play and learning opportunities throughout the day. They were developing skills such as balancing, measuring and fine motor skills like cutting. They had the freedom to choose whether to play independently or with peers and could select from various indoor play areas. Group activities, including singing, games, yoga and group discussions, provided additional opportunities for social interaction and decision making on relevant topics, like snack choices and activity planning.

Children could choose from a wide range of toys, materials and open-ended resources, which supported them to follow through their own ideas, and develop skills. To deepen learning, staff should monitor how resources are used and consider keeping them available for longer periods of time, for example changing the contents of tuff trays at lunchtime may limit opportunities for further exploration.

The service was developing planning approaches that were play-based, child-centred, and responsive to children's needs and interests. This was helping to ensure that children remain engaged and make progress in their learning. We noted that the quality and consistency of observations could be improved. Whilst all children had learning stories with a variety of observations and recorded next steps, these were not always meaningful or reviewed once achieved. Planning documents, such as floor books, tended to be descriptive rather than evaluative. Staff should now focus on evaluating observations to ensure next steps are relevant and meet the developmental needs of each child.

Staff were responsive to children's interests and developmental stages and were developing confidence in their use of higher-order thinking skills, which support children to be creative and think for themselves. Children had opportunities to talk for a variety of purposes and ask questions. Staff regularly sang with children and led musical games like "Sleeping Bunnies". Mark-making was evident across the nursery, with children writing and making notes in both rooms. Role play in the home corner was particularly strong, offering children opportunities to use their imaginations and make sense of their world.

Staff were at an early stage in tracking and assessing children's learning. The use of an online app was helping to gather data and monitor progress. Staff would benefit from additional training in this area, as this would support them to build their confidence in assessing children's learning.

There was a strong focus on helping children to learn about their local community and the wider world. Daily walks and visits to shops, parks and other places of interest enriched their experiences. Children also took part in community activities like fundraising and had been building relationships with a local care home, where they had taken part in different activities.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

Quality Indicator 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.

The setting was well-furnished, comfortable and calm. Furniture was appropriately sized for children, with use of real and child-sized items such as dressing tables, dressers and coffee tables. Rugs and mats created a warm, inviting space for younger children, while furniture like coffee tables supported those who were learning to walk.

There was sufficient lighting, with some natural light. The setting had worked to improve this with a focus on creating a cosy, warm space. We have asked that the setting continue to monitor this as brighter, natural lighting supports activities like colour recognition and helps to maintain energy levels for both children and staff. We found that noise levels could be high, especially during lunchtime when older children joined younger ones.

Children had ample opportunities to be active both indoors and outdoors. Indoor spaces supported care and play, allowing children to move freely and engage in a variety of activities. Furniture was rearranged for larger activities such as assault courses and parachute games, and we have asked staff to be mindful that space is sufficient to avoid bumps. Although there was no direct access to an outdoor space, children went outside daily to explore their local community. Activities included visits to play areas and an allotment where they learned about nature and growing vegetables.

The environment was safe and secure. Procedures for maintaining the building and toys were appropriate. Daily room checks were conducted to ensure safety and access to the building was secure, with visitor sign-in procedures, locked gates and exit buttons placed out of children's reach. Regular headcounts ensured that staff knew where children were throughout the day. Children were encouraged to think about safety and were reminded when necessary. SIMOA, the elephant, had been introduced and was effectively used by both children and staff.

Children and staff generally followed good practice for controlling infection. Children were encouraged to wash their hands before meals and after outings. A creative solution had been installed in the upstairs playroom, where a water bottle sink had been designed for children coming into the area. We have however, asked staff to review hand hygiene for snack time at the park.

There were sufficient toilets and handwashing facilities throughout the building and work had been done to improve facilities for children, we also found that the toilet and changing facilities upstairs were in need of further improvement, as a result of changes in guidance. We discussed different ways of doing this with the provider, who agreed to implement changes over the summer. (See area for improvement 1.)

Technology was used effectively, particularly for communication with parents using an online app. Children would benefit from more interactive use of technology, like exploring QR codes to learn about the world. Information was stored securely, and staff had received appropriate training. Policies and procedures around confidentiality and personal device use were appropriate, for example staff stored personal phones in the office.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that children are experiencing personal care in an environment which is suitable for their needs, the provider should ensure that the toilet facilities upstairs are refreshed and reorganised so that there are sufficient toilets, changing facilities and sinks to meet the needs of children and comply with Building Standards and Space to Grow and Thrive.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'If I require intimate personal care, there is a suitable area for this, including a sink if needed' (HSCS 5.4).

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

Quality Indicator 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.

The management and staff team engaged positively throughout the inspection process and showed a clear commitment to continuous improvement, with a focus on positive outcomes for children.

Children were cared for in a service with a clear vision, values and aims that supported their learning and development. These had been reviewed within the last year, and plans were in place to revisit them with parents and new staff members.

Children and families had opportunities to be involved in the life of the service. In addition to daily conversations, surveys and stay and play sessions, parents were invited to participate in a parents forum, where they could discuss their thoughts on the setting. A floor book showed how parents had been included in topics such as communication and transitions throughout the setting. Whilst this demonstrated strong parental engagement, the setting should now evaluate improvements with families so that they can reflect on the impact of changes.

Parents shared positive feedback about their involvement: "They always listen to what we want and help me. I'm regularly asked for my opinion" and "I've attended parent meetings at nursery to discuss future improvements".

The management structure had recently been reviewed and strengthened, encouraging further leadership opportunities amongst the staff team, for example in monitoring areas like personal planning and evaluating the quality of observations. We suggested that assigning specific staff members to oversee areas such as arts and crafts would also improve the consistency and availability of materials, as well as support staff development.

Regular meetings provided opportunities to support both the leadership team and staff and ensured that all staff felt included in the development of the setting. Self-evaluation was embedded within the setting and a variety of practice documents had been used to inform improvement, including the Care Inspectorate's mealtimes document, which had been used to review children's lunchtime experience. Further development of more critical reflection would support staff to identify meaningful next steps for the setting.

An improvement plan was in place and actively used by the management team. The plan was informed by a range of quality assurance processes, including feedback from children and families, supervision, professional development reviews, and self-evaluation. The management team had recently participated in the Care Inspectorate's improvement programme and valued the learning gained. This meant that outcomes for children had improved significantly since the last inspection and will ensure the continuous improvement of the setting.

How good is our staff team?**5 - Very Good****Quality Indicator 4.3 Staff deployment**

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 by a warm, caring, respectful 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 am so glad to have chosen Sparklers, the girls are very professional and always smiling and really positive this rubs off on children. I love how warm and cosy it is. There is so much going on".

Following several changes within the staff team, there had been a strong focus on building relationships, fostering team spirit and boosting morale. There was a strong sense of team amongst the staff, who worked well together, collaborating and communicating with one another openly throughout the day.

There was a good mix of skills and experience amongst the staff team, which helped them to support one another well. Staff were positive role models for both children and trainees. They led play in ways that empowered children to try new experiences, such as climbing at the park. The service was appropriately staffed to meet the needs of the children, with staff breaks carefully planned to have minimal disruption to children's routines and provide the right support for all children. Staff were observant and moved around to ensure that children's needs were met.

Staff felt well supported and valued by management. They were confident that they could speak to them at all times. A comprehensive induction programme was in place to ensure that new staff felt confident in their roles. All new staff were mentored by an experienced member of staff. Regular wellbeing check-ins and one-to-one meetings were held which provided staff with the opportunity to reflect on their practice and discuss their own learning goals.

Professional development was a clear priority within the setting. Staff meetings were used to share learning and a wide range of training was offered. Additional learning, including external qualifications, was actively encouraged and supported, helping staff to maintain professional registrations and develop practice.

What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

Requirements

Requirement 1

By 14 November 2023, the provider must ensure that all risks are assessed and recorded, with mitigations put in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level.

To achieve this, the provider must:

- provide accurate risk assessments

- ensure all staff are aware of identified risks and how to remove or lessen any negative impacts.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(b) (welfare of service users) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for care services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210) This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: - My environment is secure and safe (HSCS 5.17)

This requirement was made on 2 October 2023.

Action taken on previous requirement

Risk assessments had been completed for all areas of the setting, which identified hazards and how to manage these safely. These were shared with staff, who also had had an opportunity to contribute to them.

Risk assessments not only included the resources and the environment, they included assessments of how to meet the needs of both children and staff safely.

The setting had introduced SIMOA the elephant to the children and had used this as a tool for involving children in assessing risk and learning how to keep themselves safe.

Met - within timescales

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 progress their play and learning, staff should ensure personal plans, observations and child tracking is clearly recorded.

These should include, but not limited to:

- clear strategies that outline how children's needs will be met, including any next steps for them to achieve.
- ensuring they are completed in partnership with parents

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, (HSCS) which state that: My personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met, as well as my wishes and choices. (HSCS 1.15)

This area for improvement was made on 2 October 2023.

Action taken since then

Management and staff had worked hard to put in place procedures for ensuring that children are progressing in their play and learning.

All children had a personal plan, which helped the setting to gather helpful information from parents and these were reviewed within the required timescales.

Staff had had training and were developing confidence in curricular documents, like Curriculum for Excellence and Realising the Ambition, and were using these to plan fun learning experiences for children.

Staff responded to children's interests and actively sought their opinions, using this information to plan their learning experiences.

Online apps had been introduced which set out children's next steps and achievements. Alongside, verbal handovers and newsletters these helped parents to feel involved in their child's care and learning and this was confirmed with parents.

Whilst this area for improvement has been met, we have made further comments and suggestions to support the setting continue to improve in this area.

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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very 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?	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

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànan eile ma nithear iartras.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.