

# Newington Nursery Day Care of Children

Newington Primary School  
Hospital Road  
Annan  
DG12 6LA

Telephone: 01461 625 022

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
25 June 2025

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

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003501

**Service no:**  
CS2003015532

## About the service

Newington Nursery is located within Newington Primary School, Annan. Dumfries and Galloway Council provide the service. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 50 children at any one time, aged from 3 years to those not yet attending primary school.

Children are cared for in two playrooms within Newington Primary School and have access to a secure outdoor play space. Children also have opportunities to use other areas of the Newington campus, including the gym hall and grounds.

The service is based in Annan, located in the centre of the local community, and has access to local amenities and public transport.

There were 48 children registered with the service at the time of our inspection. There were 46 children aged between three and six using the service on the first day of our inspection, and 46 children aged between three and six using the service on the second day.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 and 24 June 2025 between 09:30 and 17:30. 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:

- Observed and spoke with children using the service
- Spoke with two families and received completed questionnaires from 16 families and eight staff
- Spoke with staff and management
- Observed practice and daily life
- Reviewed documents.

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

- Children experienced kind and caring interactions from staff who knew them well.
- Building relationships was a key strength of the service. Transitions from home to the service and from the service to school were well planned through a multi-agency approach.
- Staff supported their creativity and curiosity very well and children were empowered to lead their own play.
- Changes to a number of systems and processes were being introduced. We discussed plans with the management to streamline processes and implement robust auditing and monitoring systems.

## 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 leadership?	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 different parts of this key question as good and very good, with an overall grade of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

Overall, children experienced kind and compassionate interactions from staff who knew them well. One parent told us a strength in the service was, "How caring everyone is, to allow my child to gain confidence in a safe and supportive environment, to know that individual interests and wishes are respected and encouraged." There was a warm and caring ethos in the service. As a result, most children were happy and settled. Children were beginning to use soft toys to understand and talk about their feelings. This helped support their wellbeing. Children were praised and their successes were celebrated. This included wider achievements at home. As a result, children knew they mattered. We asked the service to consider alternative strategies to support some children's engagement in experiences, instead of taking them by the hand and sitting them on their knees. This would consistently respect their choices to move around freely.

All children had a personal plan in place to support staff to meet their needs. Whilst staff knew children very well, we found some inconsistencies in review dates and the transfer of key information between various methods of recording. As a result, some children's care and support strategies were not always clear and easily accessible for new staff. A new approach to personal planning was being implemented to streamline this process. This would ensure a clear and consistent approach.

Building relationships was a key strength of the service. One parent told us, "It is the best nursery in this area. The nicest, hard working and caring staff members who treat the children like they do their own. The best thing about the nursery, 100% is the staff. They make the experience so good for the children. The toys and play areas are great too but the level of care from the staff is outstanding." Transitions from home to the service and from the service to school were well planned through a multi-agency approach. This ensured children's needs were met. Staff worked hard to get to know individual children and their families through home visits before they started, and daily informal opportunities for families to come into playrooms and chat. This helped staff to become familiar with individual children's circumstances and build trust with families. As a result, positive attachments helped children to develop a sense of security.

Children experienced an unhurried mealtime with plenty of opportunities to develop their independence. They were supported to set the table, serve their own food, pour their drinks and clear away their plates. This helped them to develop life skills. Staff were caring in their approach and children who were hungry between mealtimes were offered fruit and drinks. One parent told us that, "Healthy snacks are always available, a good variety." This supported children's health and wellbeing. At times, some staff were focused on tasks during mealtimes. This meant that some children spent short periods of time eating alone and there were inconsistencies in the quality of interactions. We advised the service to consider ways to ensure all children experience meaningful conversations throughout their mealtimes. This would enhance positive outcomes.

### 1.3 Play and learning

Children were engaged in a variety of quality experiences, confidently moving around playrooms throughout the inspection. As a result, children were happy, laughing and having fun. Staff were responsive to children's individual interests and play cues and skilfully followed their lead to extend experiences. For example, the role play area had become a doctor's surgery in response to a child's real experience which led to a discussion about x-rays and videos to extend their learning. Children were also engaged for long periods of time in junk modelling and imaginative play. They spontaneously designed and created musical instruments and robot costumes and staff showed a genuine interest in their ideas. This empowered children to lead their own play and learning.

Staff supported children's creativity and curiosity very well. They were encouraged to use tablets and books to find out information and were confident in asking questions. Most staff used effective questioning well, these are open ended questions to encourage children to extend their thinking. This supported them to develop their problem solving skills.

Staff understood and promoted the benefits of outdoor play in all weathers. One parent told us that their child enjoyed, "Gardening, walking, exploring the surrounding nature, seeing local donkeys, sand play, outdoor activities, water play and so many more activities set up by the nursery staff." We observed children laughing and jumping in muddy puddles and creating cakes in the mud kitchen. They also enjoyed using tyres and planks of wood to make a seesaw, using real tools at a work bench and exploring plants and vegetables that they had grown. This supported children's knowledge and skills, as-well-as their health and wellbeing through playing in a natural environment.

Children's voices were evident in planning approaches. Staff knew children's interests and developmental needs very well. We found some inconsistencies in the recording of their observations and links to next steps. The service were in the process of moving between systems and felt the new online system would streamline this process.

Children had fun during planned and spontaneous opportunities to develop their language, literacy and numeracy skills. For example, children were encouraged to count, identify numbers and colours, engage with wall displays and read stories. This meant children were developing their skills through meaningful experiences.

Children had plenty of opportunities to develop genuine links with the school, wider community and learn together with their families. One parent told us, "My child is always included in any activities at nursery, my child went to gymnastics with nursery last week which was great! In nursery I receive photos on the learning journals to show what activities my child is doing." Children had recently taken part in the school 'world of work theme' and regularly used the school facilities. They also benefitted from regular stay and play sessions, family events, reading sessions, and community walks. These were well attended and helped children and families to develop community connections and a sense of belonging.

## How good is our leadership?

### 4 - Good

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

#### 3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Management engaged well with the inspection process and were keen to drive change and improvement. The service had experienced a period of significant challenges and recent changes to a number of their systems and processes. Management had recognised the need to prioritise staff wellbeing. Clear plans and strategies to support staff were in place. This ensured all staff felt personally and professionally supported.

The vision, values and aims had recently been revisited and developed in collaboration with staff and families. These were clearly displayed around the setting and helped to create a shared vision reflective of the current children and families using the service. One parent described the service as "Wonderful staff and a wonderful nursery."

Children and families had been meaningfully included in influencing changes within the service. For example, children had been included in choosing and buying their snacks and family feedback had led to increased opportunities to get to know staff. One parent told us, "Our views and concerns are always noted and welcomed, which I feel are a huge part in maintaining the stellar service they provide." We suggested developing further ways for families to be included in the development of the improvement plan priorities. This would help families to be involved in wider aspects of service development.

An improvement plan was in place that identified key priorities around nurture, developing the environment, raising attainment in numeracy and establishing leadership roles for children. We could see the positive impact of these in practice. Whilst staff were aware of some of the aspects of the improvement plan, they were unclear on their role in developing them. We discussed the benefits of supporting staff to engage in robust self-evaluation processes, guided by an evaluative framework and best practice documents. This would support staff to be meaningfully included in planning for improvements.

The service were in the early stages of making changes to a number of their systems and processes. This led to some gaps in areas covered their quality assurance and we found some inconsistencies in their medication records and personal plans. The management were aware of these issues. We discussed their plans to streamline processes and implement robust auditing and monitoring systems. This would support the service in identifying and rectifying any inconsistencies quickly to enhance positive outcomes for children.

## 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	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

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