Eastriggs & Dornock Early Years Day Care of Children

Nelson House
Melbourne Avenue
Eastriggs
Annan
DG12 6PP

Telephone: 07776 078 400

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 April 2026

Service provided by:
Eastriggs & Dornock Playgroup

Service provider number:
SP2003002740

Service no:
CS2003011683

About the service

Eastriggs & Dornock Early Years is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 28 children at any one time aged from 2 years 9 months to not yet attending primary school.

The service is situated within a community hall in the village of Eastriggs, Annan in Dumfries & Galloway. It operates on weekdays throughout the school year. There is a secure outdoor area to the rear of the building, where children play and enjoy being outdoors. The setting is situated close to local amenities like parks, shops and the school.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 21 April 2026, Wednesday 22 April 2026 and feedback was given on Thursday 23 April 2026. The inspection was carried out by one 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:

- spent time with children using the service
- received seven completed questionnaires from families
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- spoke with the staff
- observed practice and children's experiences
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

Key messages

The service was well led and managed, with a clear vision, good governance and effective systems for quality assurance and improvement. Parents were actively involved and felt their views were valued, supported by positive daily communication and meaningful opportunities to contribute.

A stable and committed staff team benefited from strong leadership, effective professional learning and a culture of reflection.

Children were having fun and experienced very good play and learning experiences. Staff were responsive to children's interests, enabling play to develop naturally, and supporting creativity, communication, early literacy and all areas of development through well-resourced indoor and outdoor environments.

Respectful relationships and sensitive staff interactions promoted children's safety, confidence and emotional wellbeing, enabling them to make choices, develop independence and show kindness towards one another.

Staff knew children well and supported healthy lifestyles and individual needs effectively, with positive parental feedback confirming children's happiness, progress and sense of belonging.

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

Leadership 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

The service had a clear statement of aims, vision and values which outlined what parents could expect for their child. This was shared through display and the parent handbook. Management recognised the need to review this regularly to ensure that it continues to reflect the ethos of the setting. Opportunities to involve parents in this process, such as using open afternoons and parent sessions, were discussed and would strengthen shared ownership of the vision.

The service was governed by a voluntary board of directors who were also parents. This supported meaningful parental involvement in decision making and service improvement. Management was aware that changes to the board should now be notified to the Care Inspectorate to allow required suitability checks to be completed.

Parents' views were actively welcomed, mainly through informal daily conversations. Written feedback was also encouraged through the "big book" at the entrance and children's individual learning stories, which parents used regularly. Parents confirmed this positive culture, telling us "The nursery are always asking for our ideas on what our children would like to see at nursery or what to spend donations on". We suggested the planning improvements to the outdoor area would provide a useful focus for further increasing parental involvement in service developments.

Quality assurance arrangements were in place. A monitoring calendar clearly set out planned checks and reviews, including accidents & incidents and medication. An improvement plan had been developed using self-evaluation and monitoring findings, with clear priorities identified. We suggested that breaking these priorities into smaller, measurable actions over shorter timescales would make progress more visible.

Self-evaluation was undertaken collaboratively by the staff team in a structured and focused way. This supported reflective practice and continuous improvement. We discussed ways of making this process more visible to parents to strengthen their contribution to planned improvements.

Monitoring of staff practice took place largely through informal discussion at team meetings. These discussions were not routinely recorded. We suggested introducing more regular, brief one-to-one conversations based on wellbeing and professional reflection to provide more consistent support and oversight. All staff received annual appraisals, which recognised achievements, identified challenges and informed training needs.

Professional learning was well supported, with staff accessing a wide range of training opportunities. The manager had a clear overview of training completed and refreshers due. All staff had undertaken safeguarding training, including adult protection. We suggested updating the child protection policy to explicitly include adult protection procedures.

The service benefitted from a stable staff team with very low turnover. Staff worked well together, valued one another's strengths and provided mutual support. We discussed developing staff "champion" roles further to better recognize and celebrate these strengths. Leadership within the service is strong, with an experienced and effective manager. We acknowledged the potential to further develop leadership

responsibilities to support staff development and succession, and to maximise the impact of the manager's skills across the team.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children were happy, settled and fully engaged in their play. They interacted positively with one another, showing that friendships had formed, and play was purposeful. Some children sustained complex play, developing and extending their own ideas over time. Children exercised choice and control over their learning, deciding where and how they played and with whom. Most children chose to spend significant time outdoors, with some choosing to remain outside for the majority of the day.

Staff responded very well to children's interests, following their lead and enhancing play through timely interactions and the provision of additional resources. We saw clear examples of emergent planning, with experiences adapting to children's ideas. For example, sand play developed from a dinosaur theme into beach play through the addition of water, shells and pebbles. Children's interest in a fire engine they had seen that morning was extended through resources to support role play and learning about the fire service. Staff also planned to extend children's interest in baby care over several days to ensure all children who wanted to could participate.

Children had access to a wide range of resources, including loose parts and natural materials, which supported creativity and exploration. Communication and early literacy were well supported. Staff engaged in meaningful conversations, helping to extend vocabulary and share information. Children sang spontaneously, enjoyed books independently and had frequent opportunities for mark making indoors and outdoors. Staff encouraged children to use language to express needs and emotions. We discussed introducing visual supports, like a timetable, to help children who find spoken language challenging at times.

Children's physical development was well supported. Outdoors, children experienced opportunities for energetic play, including running and cycling. Fine motor skills were promoted through activities like playdough and arts and crafts. Numeracy and early mathematical understanding were effectively embedded through play, for example counting pieces in puzzles and sharing resources fairly at group activities.

Children were developing an understanding the natural world and caring for their environment. They were involved in planting and maintaining flowers, watering plants and learning about recycling. Community walks supported children's awareness of their local environment.

Children were curious and eager to learn about the world around them. We talked about developing the use of digital technology and STEM even further to support research, problem solving and higher-order thinking skills. While staff engaged children in conversations that supported learning, the use of more open-ended questioning could be more consistently embedded.

Staff knew children very well and confidently described their progress and achievements. Online learning records were at an early stage of implementation. While next steps had been identified, these were not always reviewed or updated in a timely way. Staff met regularly to discuss children's progress and plan next steps together, but recording of observations and progress was not yet consistently robust.

Parents spoke very positively about the care and learning their children achieved. They described staff as welcoming, caring and highly knowledgeable, and highlighted strong relationships, outdoor learning, community involvement and support for early literacy. Children also told they enjoyed playing with their friends, being outdoors and caring for plants. This feedback strongly reflects the positive experiences observed during the inspection.

Children are supported to achieve — 5 - Very Good

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement, therefore we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children were cared for in a warm, nurturing and safe environment, where positive relationships were evident. Staff demonstrated a strong commitment to building meaningful relationships with children and families, which contributed to a culture of trust and security. Children confidently approached staff for help and comfort, showing that they felt safe and listened to. Importantly, children were supported to make choices, for example selecting the member of staff they preferred to help them with personal care, and staff consistently respected these decisions.

Staff interactions with children were consistently polite, calm and respectful. When supporting children to resolve disagreements, staff spoke gently and encouraged kindness and empathy. Children's achievements were recognised and praised, helping to promote confidence and self-esteem. As a result, children were observed to be kind and considerate towards one another.

Children were encouraged to take responsibility within the nursery. They contributed to everyday routines such as snack and meal preparation, tidying up and caring for the environment. These opportunities promoted independence, co-operation and a sense of belonging.

Mealtimes and snacks were generally relaxed, sociable and inclusive, with healthy food provided in line with guidance. Children were encouraged to develop independence by using cutlery, pouring drinks and preparing their food. Children were able to choose how much they wished to eat. However, there were a few occasions when staff were task-focused, which meant that they did not always notice when children were eating too quickly or not cutting food into manageable pieces.

All children had personal plans in place, and staff were knowledgeable about children's individual needs, including allergies and dietary preferences. Personal plans included required information and were informed by the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators and reviewed within appropriate timescales. However, the organisation and accessibility of personal plan folders would benefit from improvement, as information was sometimes difficult to find. Some key details, such as specific symptoms relating to allergies and clear guidance around health needs, were not always recorded. Using clearer layouts, dividers and a concise one-page profile summarising strategies could support consistency and clarity. Despite this, staff demonstrated a strong understanding of individual children and how to support them effectively.

Children were learning about healthy lifestyles through food choices and physical activity, including yoga and outdoor games. Staff were committed to developing this area further. Sleep and rest arrangements were discussed, with consideration given to providing a dedicated quiet space to support children who require sleep or time to regulate during busy periods.

Parental feedback was very positive. Parents described staff as caring, knowledgeable and trustworthy, and

valued the strong communication and sense of partnership. Parents reported that children felt safe, settled and happy, attended confidently, and had made significant progress in areas such as confidence and communication. Families consistently described the nursery as welcoming and supportive, and described it like a second family.

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

Management should develop their procedures for formal monitoring of staff practice so that they enable staff to reflect on their childcare practice in a way which improves the service.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes" (HSCS 4.19) and "I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on practice and follow their professional and organisational codes". (HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 27 February 2019.

Action taken since then

A monitoring calendar is in place which includes staff practice. Monitoring tends to be informal and discussed at team meetings so that all staff receive the same message.

Staff have annual appraisals which include performance and training needs.

We discussed using peer review, and paperwork like observations/personal plans as a starting point.

We have also suggested developing the annual appraisal system to one which is more focused on wellbeing checks, and which would include more regular 1:1 short sessions to discuss wellbeing and personal needs to support practice.

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good

Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good

Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	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 cànain eile ma nithear iarrtas.

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.