Wallyford Playgroup
Day Care of Children

Wallyford Playgroup
Wallyford Learning Campus
Masons way
Wallyford Musselburgh
EH21 8BF

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
28 October 2025

Service provided by:
Committee Of Wallyford Playgroup

Service provider number:
SP2003002887

Service no:
CS2003011971

About the service

Wallyford Playgroup is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 29 children aged from 2 years to not yet attending primary school at any one time. The care service operates between the hours of Monday to Thursday 09:30 to 12:30 and Friday 09:00 to 12:00.

The service is located Wallyford Learning Campus. Children have access to a large playroom, toilet/changing area. There is direct access into an enclosed garden and playgroup has its own secure entrance.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 22 and 23 October 2025, between 09:15 and 12:30 on both days. This 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with children using the service and their family members
- spoke with staff and the manager
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- received 26 completed questionnaires from families and three from staff
- observed practice and daily life
- 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, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvement is necessary within Leadership Heading.

During this inspection we 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.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

Key messages

• Children benefitted from staff interactions that were kind and supportive.

• Children would further benefit from improved of personal planning.

• The nurturing approach and community connections were central to the service's ethos.

• The manager had shown a strong commitment ongoing development during a period of uncertainty and change.

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	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	4 - 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.

Leadership and management of staff and resources

The staff team showed strong commitment to creating a safe, caring environment for children who were beginning their early learning childcare journey. Providing a nurturing approach and community connections were central to the service's ethos. Families spoke positively about staff's caring nature and individual attention. One family said, "I wish I had enrolled my child sooner." The service's vision and values had evolved over time. Reviewing these with input from families, children and staff could strengthen shared understanding of what the service strives to provide.

Almost all families agreed or strongly agreed they were involved in a meaningful way to help develop the service. Open dialogue through daily communication. One family said, "They always ask for feedback." Continuing to involve families and capturing children's voices would help them feel valued and included.

The manager had shown a strong commitment to improving the service during a time of change. Despite challenges, such as relocation and recruiting a new team, clear planning and adaptability helped maintain progress. Transitions were well managed and families were kept informed, helping children feel safe and secure. The manager and provider had actively supported ongoing developments through fundraising, sourcing furniture and assessing new spaces. As a result, children and families benefitted from a well-organised, safe environment that supported wellbeing, play and learning. The service was in a more settled period and could begin developing self-evaluation and improvement planning. Staff identified priorities such as, improving personal planning and tracking children's development. Updating the improvement plan and using it as a working document would support regular review and progress. Clear priorities will help focus efforts and lead to continuous improvement, benefiting children's learning and wellbeing.

Quality assurance had improved and was starting to positively impact outcomes for children. Policies and procedures had been reviewed, for example, medication and protection and some auditing had taken place. However, some gaps remained, for example, personal planning and staff development reviews. Stronger auditing and monitoring would support a more consistent approach and help maintain a high-quality service. An area for improvement following the last inspection had not been met and will be carried forward.

Staff had been recruited in line with safer recruitment practices, including volunteers. Some staff had completed a general induction and one staff member had taken part in a probationary review. Staff had accessed core learning both in person and online. While there had been improvements following the last inspection. Limited time and opportunities available meant there was an inconsistent approach to induction, developmental reviews, reflective practice and mentoring. Strengthening these processes would help build staff confidence and improve outcomes for children. An area for improvement following the last inspection had not been met and will be carried forward.

Children play and learn 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.

Play, learning and developing

Children were happy, confident and meaningfully involved in leading their own play and learning. Free-flow access between indoors and outdoors promoted children choice and encouraged exploration. One family commented, "The door is always open, I always see the children out playing". Children were active, confident and engaged in outdoor play. They enjoyed bouncing on the trampoline, playing with the ball and exploring sand. Wheeled toys supported physical development and coordination. Children showed energy and enjoyment throughout their play. Families valued the range of play experiences provided for children, one family commented, "My child enjoys playgroup activities, which are not typically offered at home". Indoors, children were engaged in painting, singing, playdough and small world play supporting their creativity and development. However, many toys were single-use plastic, which limited engagement and opportunities for problem solving, critical thinking and imagination. Increasing access to natural, open-ended materials would support more purposeful play, curiosity and creativity.

Staff interactions during play were caring and responsive. They noticed children's non-verbal cues and supported communication through eye contact and face-to-face interactions. Singing during play reflected a responsive approach to children's interests. One family commented, "It is a happy and caring environment for younger children helping them socialise and prepare them for their next step in nursery". Sharing books, more singing and using props could strengthen approaches to early language and literacy. Limited natural resources and underused areas such as, the home corner and story space reduced opportunities for high-quality questioning, imaginative play and sustained shared thinking. By observing children's individual play experiences across spaces within a high-quality environment would enrich interactions and deepen learning.

Planning for play was mainly responsive and planned experiences included seasonal themes, community celebrations, transitions and daily routines. One family commented, "Staff genuinely care for your child and show so much interest in life inside and outside the service". Some experiences were documented in a floor book. To help this be more meaningful to children, regularly updating and involving children in the process would help them reflect on achievements and provide a sense of ownership.

Families were kept informed of children's play and learning experiences through digital updates and yearly progress reports. Recently introduced development milestones were used to track children's progress and plan next steps. However, observations of play, learning and development were limited and not routinely recorded. Observing children individually could help make learning more meaningful and challenging. We sign posted the service to best practice guidance, Realising the Ambition, being me (Scottish Government, 2020). An area for improvement following the last inspection had not been met and will be carried forward.

Children are supported to achieve 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.

Nurturing care and support

Staff had built strong relationships with children. They offered warm, individual care and responded to children in a nurturing way. This helped children feel safe, valued and confident. One family commented, "I feel like the staff genuinely care about the children". Another family told us, "Staff have developed a strong bond with my child, I can see this reflects the care they provide". The calm, nurturing environment supported children to settle quickly and join in play. Staff comforted children who felt unsure, using familiar items, kind words and hugs. These actions showed a strong understanding of children's emotional needs and the importance of consistent care.

Transitions were well supported. Staff worked closely with families and used approaches that suited each child. The manager shared key information and arranged settling visits. These steps helped children feel safe and confident. One family commented, "The team are so welcoming, patient and supportive, they've really taken the time to get to know my child and make them feel comfortable". Children had formed close bonds with staff, who responded in a caring manner to children's emotional needs. This contributed to supporting children and families who were starting their Early learning and childcare journey.

Staff had developed good relationships with families, this contributed to improving children's overall wellbeing and experience. All families agreed or strongly agreed they had a good relationship with staff. Daily dialogue and regular updates via the digital platform, newsletters and floor books strengthened communication with families. Families were positive about the regular updates they received. Events like stay and play and the summer gala helped build strong relationships. Community visits and planning for the Christmas fair strengthened local links. As a result, children and their families were included the in service and wider community.

Staff supported children's wellbeing through daily care and strong relationships. However, personal planning was inconsistent. Documented information about children was not always transferred into their individual plans and planned support was inconsistently recorded. This meant some plans were not up to date and lacked follow-up actions to support children effectively. For example, strategies to support children who needed them. Using the wellbeing indicators from the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) framework could help strengthen the personal planning approach and contribute to all children receiving consistent, tailored support at a time that is right for them. The manager had started to make improvements. They recently introduced a keyworker system and discussed how all staff will be involved in updating plans and chronologies, these improvements were a positive start in ensuring all children's support is well planned for. A previous area for improvement under the heading 'Leadership' had not been met and will be carried forward.

Children's healthcare needs were met as effective systems were in place. Staff stored medication safely and maintained clear records, including emergency plans. They understood children's medical needs and allergies, which helped them respond confidently. Termly audits kept information up to date. As a result, children received safe, consistent care that supported their health and wellbeing.

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 promote consistently positive play experiences for children, staff should use best practice guidance to support and develop their knowledge and skills in relation to play and the play experiences they provide children.

This is to ensure that staffing is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state:

'As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open-ended and natural materials' (HSCS 1.31); and

'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

This area for improvement was made on 26 October 2023.

Action taken since then

Since the last inspection, some progress had been made with a new staff team now in place. Staff were committed to improving their practice and had began to engage with training and guidance. Their caring and supportive interactions helped children feel safe, respected and valued. To build on this, the environment could be further improved by using best practice guidance to create more inviting play spaces and by adding open-ended resources. This would support children's curiosity, problem-solving skills, and would contribute to deepening the quality of staff questioning. Refer to the the heading Children play and learn in the main body of the report.

This area for improvement had not been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To promote consistently positive outcomes for children the provider and manager should develop an effective quality assurance system to evaluate the quality of the provision. This is to support the service to plan and make improvements that have a positive impact on children's experiences.

This is to ensure that management and leadership is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

This area for improvement was made on 26 October 2023.

Action taken since then

Quality assurance was beginning to improve outcomes for children. Updated policies and staff reflection supported more consistent approaches to safeguarding and healthcare. However, gaps remained in personal planning, resources and staff reviews. Strengthening auditing and monitoring would further improve the quality of the service and ensure more consistent outcomes for children.

This area for improvement had not been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support the service and ensure it meets its own operational constitution the provider should submit an action plan to the Care Inspectorate detailing how it will recruit a committee. This would support a culture of inclusion and working together to improve outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that management and leadership is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed' (HSCS 4.23).

This area for improvement was made on 26 October 2023.

Action taken since then

An action plan was submitted following the last inspection detailing how the provider would recruit a committee.

This area for improvement had been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

The provider and manager should undertake professional development reviews with all staff. This would ensure that staff understand the expectations around their practice and use their updated professional development to improve outcomes for children.

This is to ensure that staffing is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent, skilled and are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 26 October 2023.

Action taken since then

In-service days supported staff development and helped clarify expectations around practice. Staff used this time to reflect and improve outcomes for children. However, formal development reviews for both staff and the manager had not yet been carried out. While informal support was available through ongoing dialogue, introducing structured reviews would strengthen reflective practice and support more targeted professional development.

This area for improvement had not been met.

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	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good

Children are supported to achieve	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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