Dalbeattie Primary Nursery
Day Care of Children

Dalbeattie Primary School
Dalbeattie Learning Campus
Craignair Road
Dalbeattie
DG5 4LU

Telephone: 01556 613 130

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 September 2026

Service provided by:
Dumfries & Galloway Council

Service provider number:
SP2003003501

Service no:
CS2003015479

About the service

Dalbeattie Primary Nursery is a daycare for children service situated in Dalbeattie, Dumfries and Galloway. The service is provided by Dumfries and Galloway Council. It is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 60 children aged two years to not yet attending primary school at any one time: No more than 10 children aged two years old. At the time of our inspection, 31 children were registered with the service.

The service has sole use of the premises and the outdoor play area. Children can freely move between indoors and a secure outdoor area. The centre is within walking distance of local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday, 22 September and Wednesday, 23 September 2026, between the hours of 09:45 and 16:30 on day one, and 09:30 to 16:30 on day two. 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:

- spoke with children using the service
- received completed electronic questionnaires from six families and five members of staff
- spoke with the staff and the management team
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvements are needed throughout this inspection report.

Key messages

- Strong leadership and effective quality assurance supported continuous improvement, resulting in positive experiences and outcomes for children and families.
- Skilled, motivated staff used professional learning and reflection to improve practice, helping children feel confident, supported and engaged.
- Children were confident and engaged learners, benefiting from responsive planning that reflected their interests, choices and rights.
- Warm, skilled staff interactions extended children's learning, supporting independence, problem solving and confidence through meaningful play experiences.
- Children felt safe, valued and secure through nurturing relationships and care that reflected their individual needs and choices.
- Strong partnerships with families supported consistent care, helping children develop confidence, independence and positive wellbeing.

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	5 - Very 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 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources.

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.

Leadership and management supported positive outcomes for children and families. There was a clear sense of shared purpose across the service. The vision, values and aims had been reviewed with staff, children and families and were shared throughout the service and wider school. Staff understood the values of 'Believe to Achieve', and these were reflected in their practice. Children experienced warm, nurturing interactions from staff who knew them well and supported them to be confident, engaged and involved in their learning.

The service had a clear improvement plan which had been developed with contributions from staff, children and families. Priorities linked to self-evaluation, quality assurance and identified areas for development. Responsibilities were clearly allocated and progress was tracked. This helped staff understand improvement priorities and how their individual roles contributed to improving outcomes for children. A parent-friendly version helped families understand the service's improvement journey. Parents shared with us: "Our feedback is often asked for and we participate willingly in opportunities to share feedback with the nursery;" and "They send out and email with the improvement plan and always ask for feedback."

Quality assurance processes were having a positive impact on children's learning and development. These included monitoring children's experiences, audits and reviewing personal learning plans and planning. Staff had guidance to support consistent expectations. Importantly, the service used findings to make changes. For example, monitoring of the lunchtime experience identified that the environment should be fully prepared before children arrived. This had been discussed with staff and, during the inspection, the improved arrangements were in place. As a result, children experienced a more organised and positive lunchtime.

The service had a positive approach to self-evaluation. Staff and parents reflected on practice using the framework, and their views helped shape the improvement plan. This supported staff to make meaningful improvements to practice and children's experiences. As a result, children and families experienced a service that continued to develop in response to their needs. A staff member shared, "We are evaluating all the time to see what are working and what isn't."

Staff were knowledgeable, motivated and keen to explain how their learning influenced their practice. Professional learning, including 'Realising the Ambition', 'Pedal Power', and Froebel approaches and woodworking, had supported staff to develop their skills. Children benefited from staff using this knowledge meaningfully. For example, outdoors, staff helped children understand why helmets were important rather than simply telling them to wear them. Leadership responsibilities were also matched effectively to staff members' skills and knowledge.

Staff meetings supported professional discussion, reflection and improvement. Actions from meetings were evident in practice. For example, an outdoor checklist discussed by the team had been introduced and was being used by staff and children. A communication book also helped ensure important day-to-day information was shared across the team. Staff told us, "Staff meetings are held regularly to keep everyone

up to date."

New staff experienced effective induction and mentoring. They told us they felt supported by the manager and wider staff team and were confident asking for guidance when unsure. This promoted a positive culture of teamwork and helped staff provide consistent care and support. Overall, leadership approaches created a supportive environment where staff felt valued, understood expectations and worked together to improve experiences and outcomes for children.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing.

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 experienced opportunities to play, learn and develop. They were confident, settled and highly engaged in their play. The playroom had a calm and purposeful atmosphere, where children moved freely between experiences and made choices about their learning. Children were enthusiastic about sharing what they had been doing. For example, children proudly shared shape pictures they had created and children asked for their work to be displayed for others to see. This helped children feel that their achievements were recognised and valued.

Planning approaches were child-centred and responsive to children's interests. There was an appropriate balance between child-led experiences and skilful adult support. Children's ideas and interests were captured through planning and the 'big book', which demonstrated how their voices influenced experiences. Staff had worked hard to develop this approach and it was becoming embedded in practice. This supported continuity in children's learning and helped staff recognise and build on children's individual interests and achievements.

Children had opportunities to develop early language, literacy and numeracy skills through meaningful play. Numbers, shapes, books and opportunities for mark making were naturally incorporated throughout the environment. Children confidently used their existing knowledge during their play. For example, they independently played hopscotch and 'What's the Time, Mr Wolf?', using numbers and counting without needing adult direction. Books were readily available across different areas, alongside a welcoming book corner which encouraged children to relax and enjoy stories.

Children's views, choices and rights were respected. Staff knew children very well and responded sensitively to their individual needs. Children and staff demonstrated a good understanding of children's rights, and children's voices were evident within planning and everyday experiences. For example, when a child did not want to participate in an experience in the gym hall, staff respected their decision. They did not place pressure on the child to participate and sensitively supported them to engage in a way that felt right for them. Other children also responded positively and supportively. This contributed to an inclusive environment where children felt safe, respected and listened to.

Staff interactions were a significant strength. They were warm, nurturing and responsive and staff positioned themselves at children's level. They recognised opportunities to extend learning without taking over children's play. Staff used open-ended questions and this encouraged children to think, predict, problem solve and develop their own ideas.

Staff also supported children to consider challenge and risk positively. Rather than immediately telling children that something was unsafe, they encouraged them to consider what might happen and how they could approach situations safely. This supported children to become confident learners who could make decisions, solve problems and increasingly assess risk for themselves.

Overall, children benefited from a nurturing and stimulating environment where play was valued and their ideas influenced their experiences. Skilled staff interactions, responsive planning and a strong focus on children's rights supported children to be confident, independent and successful learners. A parent shared, "I can see huge development in my child. Confidence, kindness, playing with other children and learning skills such as patience, sharing. Interests such as gardening, reading have grown since starting. My child has developed from a shy toddler, into a confident, happy little child who loves going in daily, seeing their friends and teachers."

Children are supported to achieve — 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support.

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 experienced nurturing care and support. Staff knew children very well and were responsive to their individual needs, preferences and personalities. Warm and respectful relationships helped children feel safe, secure and valued. Staff supported all children while also developing strong relationships with families. This provided children with consistency and helped staff recognise when children needed additional reassurance or support. A parent told us a positive aspect of the service was, "The ladies and how treat my child. Being treated as individual with the best care and support. Always go above and beyond and make time for my child and family. My child is super happy going into nursery and tell us about day, always seems to be a fun filled exciting day, learning new information and skills."

Children's rights, views and choices were respected and promoted throughout their experiences. Staff naturally supported children to understand their rights. For example, children explored their right to a name and discussed privacy, with children's rights displayed throughout the setting. This helped children develop an understanding that their views mattered and that they had the right to be respected and listened to.

Mealtimes were calm, relaxed and positive social experiences. Although it was early in the new term, children were confident with established routines. Staff sat alongside children, creating opportunities for warm conversations and supporting a sociable atmosphere. Children chose where to sit, served some of their own food, poured drinks and cleared away when finished. They confidently washed their hands and understood why this was important. Children were happy to wait when spaces were unavailable and enjoyed talking with their friends. This promoted children's independence, confidence and development of important life skills. A parent shared, "My child has really grown his self confidence, his speech and even his eating. My child is thriving and learning to make new friends. He is even counting now too. Really happy with his progress."

Personal plans contained detailed information about children's care, needs and individual next steps. These were agreed with families, signed and dated, and reviewed at least every six months or sooner when children's needs changed. Staff met with parents to develop and review plans, supporting meaningful

information sharing and ensuring children's care reflected their current needs. The service had also been testing online learning journals to identify what worked best for children, families and staff.

Families were welcomed into the service and experienced positive communication with staff. At the end of the day, parents entered the setting and staff took time to share information about children's experiences. This helped develop trusting relationships and supported continuity between children's home and nursery experiences.

Children's health, wellbeing and safety were supported by effective procedures. Medication systems were appropriately managed, with no concerns identified. Accident and incident records had been completed appropriately and auditing supported management oversight. This helped ensure information was reviewed and any necessary action could be identified.

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They confidently described the actions they would take if they had concerns about a child's wellbeing or safety. This gave assurance that staff understood their responsibilities and knew how to respond appropriately to help keep children safe.

Infection prevention and control practices supported children's wellbeing. Children and staff followed good handwashing routines, the environment was clean and well maintained, and tables were cleaned before and after meals. This reduced the risk of infection.

Overall, children benefited from nurturing and responsive care delivered by staff who knew them well. Respectful relationships, meaningful involvement of families and a strong focus on children's rights helped children feel safe, valued, included and confident.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.scot.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very 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

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Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot

0345 600 9527

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