# Wigtown Nursery
# Day Care of Children

Wigtown Primary School
New Road
Wigtown
Newton Stewart
DG8 9JE

Telephone: 01988 402 300

**Type of inspection:**
Unannounced

**Completed on:**
21 May 2026

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

**Service provider number:**
SP2003003501

**Service no:**
CS2003015546

## About the service

Wigtown Nursery is part of the primary school of Wigtown, near Newton Stewart. The service is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 40 children at any one time aged from 2 years to not yet of an age to attend primary school, of those no more than 5 are aged 2 to under 3 years.

The nursery is conveniently situated close to the town centre, with easy access to shops, parks and other places of local interest.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 19 May and Wednesday 20 May 2026. Feedback was given on the morning of Thursday 21 May 2026. The inspection was carried out by an 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 eight 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 nursery provided a caring and supportive environment where children and families were valued. By building on current strengths and developing more structured approaches to evaluation and improvement, the service is well placed to continue improving outcomes for children.
- Children experienced a warm, nurturing environment where they felt happy, settled and secure, enabling them to build strong friendships.
- Staff showed a clear commitment to following children's interests, creating meaningful play experiences that are engaging and relevant, including valuable involvement from the local community.
- Strong relationships between staff, children and families helped to create a sense of trust and belonging. Good communication with parents helped to ensure that children's needs were well understood and met.
- The nursery offered a safe, clean and welcoming environment where children felt happy and secure. By continuing to build on these strengths and making small improvements, the service can further enhance children's experiences and support their independence and 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 | 4 - Good |
| Children thrive and develop in quality spaces | 5 - Very 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.

The nursery had a clear statement of Vision, Values and Aims which was displayed throughout the setting and helped parents to understand what the nursery was striving to achieve for children. We found that this was a positive feature of the service. Management were aware that this was due for review with both parents and children, so that the values truly reflect the whole community.

Staff and management recognised that this statement could be used more actively as a working tool, supporting reflection and improvement. There were opportunities to link it more closely to staff practice, helping them to consider how well they were meeting children's needs and identify areas for development, such as training or new resources.

The setting had an improvement plan informed by self-evaluation, quality assurance processes and parental feedback. A Standards and Quality report also supported this by outlining priorities for the setting.

Staff were continuing to build confidence in using the new self-evaluation framework. We discussed how using challenge questions during staff meetings could further strengthen reflective practice and support continuous improvement. A monitoring calendar was in place and covered key aspects of the nursery. However, much of the monitoring was taking place on an informal basis and was not always recorded. Strengthening this area would help provide clearer evidence of how the nursery identified and addressed improvement needs.

Parents were encouraged to share feedback through a suggestions box and care plan reviews. Feedback was very positive, with parents reporting: "We have the opportunity to contribute and offer feedback through a communicative and approachable nursery manager" and "the staff are great ... always take time to listen". Parents also spoke highly about stay and play sessions, with many saying that they would welcome more opportunities like this.

The setting benefited from an experienced and caring staff team who knew each other well and provided good support to colleagues. Staff spoke very positively about their experience, telling us: "new staff are supported and helped settle into the role" and "everyone is supportive and welcoming".

Staff have had some opportunities to develop leadership skills, for example by taking responsibility for specific areas like the development of the outdoors. However, formal reviews of staff practice had not been carried out recently. This is an important step for the service. Introducing a more structured approach to professional review and development will help staff to grow in their roles, promote greater consistency in practice, and further improve outcomes for children. We discussed a range of approaches to ensure that this process remains clearly focused on children's experiences, making feedback more meaningful, purposeful and directly linked to improving children's learning and wellbeing.

## Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 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.

The setting provided a spacious, bright and well-ventilated environment where children felt welcome, safe and secure. Effective systems were in place to manage access to the building, including visitor checks and sign-in procedures, helping to ensure children's safety at all times.

The environment was well maintained, with appropriate arrangements in place to ensure that the building remained safe and suitable for children's needs. Staff were trained in first aid and food hygiene, giving reassurance that children were cared for appropriately throughout the day.

Staff showed a strong awareness of children's safety, regularly reminding them about how to keep themselves safe. While this helps protect children, there is an opportunity to further develop a more balanced approach to risk and benefit, ensuring children are consistently supported to build confidence and learn how to manage risk for themselves. The setting had risk assessments in place, which were regularly reviewed and updated. Children were beginning to be involved in this process, for example through the use of pictorial risk assessments in the outdoor area, and this is a positive approach that could be developed further.

Children had access to a wide range of resources and materials, both indoors and outdoors. They were able to move resources freely and adapt their play spaces, for example, creating dens and extending the construction area, which supported their creativity and independence.

Staff were continuing to develop the outdoor environment, including working with parents and the wider community to improve the variety of resources available. This will further enhance children's play experiences and opportunities.

The nursery was clean, tidy and well-organised, with appropriate infection prevention measures in place. These included regular cleaning of toys and resources and clear procedures for illness and exclusion periods. Children were supported to understand good hygiene routines, such as washing hands after using the toilet and before meals.

Children's personal information was stored securely, and staff had received training in data protection. Confidential spaces were available for private conversations with parents, ensuring sensitive information could be discussed appropriately.

Parents shared very positive views about the environment and care provided. They told us: "the nursery is a welcoming, clean, tidy and safe space which my child loves."

## 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.

Children came into the setting happily, appearing settled and confident. They quickly engaged in play and made choices about where and with whom to play. We saw that children were forming positive friendships and they told us that they enjoyed playing together.

Children benefited from access to a wide range of resources, supporting both their interests and development. Staff responded well to children's needs, helping them to develop their ideas and extend their play. A particular strength was the way staff listened to children's interests and responded creatively. For

example, when children expressed an interest in boats, staff worked with parents and members of the community to develop boat-themed activities both indoors and outside. This included real-life resources such as lobster pots provided by a local fisherman. This experience helped children to learn more about their community and the world around them.

Children were developing their communication skills well. Many were able to express themselves clearly, and they enjoyed listening to stores and independently accessing books. Children took part enthusiastically in singing and group activities, such as familiar songs, which supported both communication and physical movement. Children had opportunities to explore digital learning, for example using walkie-talkies, which they enjoyed using to communicate across wider spaces.

We observed children engaging in complex and cooperative play, with some clearly developing imaginative storylines. Staff were beginning to capture these experiences, by creating stories, for example, they created a story about space which is on display in the parent waiting area. We suggested additional ways to record children's ideas, such as creating books or using storytelling approaches, ensuring children understand and feel part of this process.

Staff interacted warmly with children and provided support where needed. They helped keep children safe and offered guidance during play. We identified further opportunities to extend children's thinking further, particularly through more consistent use of open-ended questions. While staff did ask questions, these were often focused on safety. Increasing the use of questions that encourage children to think, predict and explain would further enhance learning.

All children had learning journals, which were accessible to them and showed their progress over time. These were a valuable part of tracking children's development. There were some inconsistencies in how these were recorded. Observations were often descriptive rather than evaluative and would benefit from more focus on children's learning. Children's voices were evident in planning records, showing that their ideas do shape learning experiences. There was an opportunity to involve children more directly in reviewing their own learning within their journals.

Planning showed a good balance of child-led and adult-led experiences. Staff used children's interests to shape learning opportunities. Moving forward, linking planning more clearly to evaluations and next steps would strengthen this further.

Parents told us: "the nursery have a large range of activities they offer the children. There's something for everyone" and "I am always impressed by the broad range of activities and learning for my child".

## 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.

The setting provided a warm, welcoming and nurturing environment where staff were kind and caring. As a result, children appeared to feel safe, secure and happy to attend, confident about asking for what they needed. Positive relationships were a key strength of the service, with staff knowing the children and their families very well.

Staff supported children to begin to understand kindness and respect, encouraging them to think about

their actions and care for one another. We saw that children were kind and respectful in their interactions to one another. Staff praised children and valued their efforts.

Children were encouraged to be independent, for example by changing shoes and putting on coats. There were opportunities to build on this further by involving children more in everyday routines, such as helping to prepare snacks and meals or identifying their own belongings, like their toothbrushes. This would help strengthen children's confidence and sense of responsibility.

Each child had a personal care plan based on information shared by parents and linked to wellbeing indicators. Whilst staff had a strong understanding of individual children's needs, this was not always fully reflected in written plans. Clearer recording of strategies and supports will help to ensure consistency and continuity of care, particularly for all staff supporting children. We discussed the potential use of one-page profiles, which could provide clear, accessible information about each child to support all adults working with them.

Staff encouraged children to communicate, and some visual supports were available. However, these were not always accessible to children, as they were placed too high or not clearly visible. There was an opportunity to develop the use of visual and non-verbal communication tools, particularly for younger children or those new to the nursery, to help them understand routines and feel secure in what to expect.

Transitions into nursery and on to primary school were flexible and responsive to children's needs, supporting children to feel settled and confident. Some daily routines, such as group times before lunch, helped children understand what was happening next. There was an opportunity to further support children by clearly communicating changes and routines, such as when it was time for lunch or home.

Mealtimes provided opportunities for children to develop social skills and independence. Staff joined children at table and modelled positive behaviours. We saw improvements over the course of the visit, with children being more involved in preparing for snack and lunch. Continuing to build on this will support independence and confidence.

However, experiences were not always consistent. For example, not all children received drinks at snack and lunchtime and at times, staff positioning limited interaction and encouragement. A more consistent approach will help to ensure that mealtimes are a positive, relaxed and supportive experience for all children. Simple changes, such as ensuring cups are more accessible and offering encouragement appropriately, will make a difference. We suggested that the nursery may benefit from using the Care Inspectorate's mealtimes practice guidance to support further improvements.

The nursery had positive relationships with parents, who described staff as approachable and supportive. They told us staff were "great at communicating and keeping us up to date". Parents valued opportunities to be involved, such as stay and play sessions, and expressed interest in having more of these. At present, parents do not always routinely enter the playrooms. Reviewing this in line with "Me, My Family and My Childcare Setting" guidance would support even stronger partnerships and shared understanding of children's experiences.

## 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 thrive and develop in quality spaces | 5 - Very Good |
|---|---|
| Children experience high quality spaces | 5 - Very 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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