Malory Day Nursery
Day Care of Children

20 Shakespeare Street
Dumfries
DG1 2JE

Telephone: 01387 269 943

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
29 July 2025

Service provided by:
Malory Nurseries

Service provider number:
SP2003003191

Service no:
CS2005088027

About the service

Malory Day Nursery is a daycare for children service situated in Dumfries. The service is registered to provide care to a maximum of 28 children from birth to those not yet attending primary school. At the time of the inspection, 55 children were registered with the service, and 12 children attended on day one, while 15 children attended on day two.

The service has an outdoor play area. Children were able to move freely between indoors and a secure outdoor area. The centre is within walking distance of local amenities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate. It took place on 28 and 29 July 2025. The inspector attended the service between 09:45 and 16:30 hours on 28 July and from 09:00 to 14:30 hours on 29 July.

To prepare for the inspection, we reviewed information about the service. This included registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- observed practice and daily life
- spoke with children using the service
- reviewed documents
- spoke with the manager and staff
- received 32 completed questionnaires from parents/carers to gather their views and feedback.

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 enjoyed a relaxed and social experience at mealtimes.
- Children joined in well with activities which were on offer.
- Children benefitted from connections to their local community.
- Management and staff worked well as a team to support children's needs.
- Parents' views were sought to help improve the service.

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 setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	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 this key question as good, where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support.

Almost all children experienced warm and nurturing interactions from staff who understood their needs and preferences. Important information had been collected about the children before they started attending the service, and each child was assigned a key worker who took time to learn their likes, dislikes, and daily care requirements. Parents told us: "Welcoming staff, child feels safe with key worker & other staff members;" and "Staff are all very friendly, the settling in process was great and taken at my child's pace, nothing is any bother, my child is happy and safe." This demonstrated that trusting relationships had been established.

Most staff interactions were kind and caring towards children; however, some interactions were task led. Staff team would benefit from reviewing their understanding of rights-based childcare practice. This ensures children are treated with respect and dignity and have their individual needs and preferences met. This positive practice would support children to feel safe, secure, and respected.

We would also ask to look at it being keyworkers who change children as what we have found that children develop a deeper bond and it is not just a chore. The changing experience should be a relaxed, happy, and social routine that provides valuable opportunities for interactions between staff and children on an individual basis.

Children were actively involved in organising the lunchtime routine. They helped staff to set up lunch, which supported them in developing life skills. Staff sat alongside children, supporting them when needed. This helped keep children safe during mealtimes. Most children were encouraged to serve their meals and were supported to pour drinks and clear away their plates after eating. As a result, children were developing their independence. They were relaxed and enjoyed the food that was provided. Fresh water was available throughout the day, and children were encouraged to access it. This helped keep children hydrated.

Personal plans supported children's overall wellbeing. The plan records provided staff information about children's health, wellbeing, and safety needs. They were developed in collaboration with families. Both management and staff were knowledgeable about children's individual needs. They had developed clear strategies to support children to have a positive experience at the nursery. This support helped build children's resilience and supported positive outcomes.

Children were kept safe and well. Medication was stored securely, and children's medication records were accurately completed. Accidents and incidents were recorded and appropriately shared with parents. These processes supported children's overall wellbeing.

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning.

Children were settled and engaged in play across the service. They told us they enjoyed playing with their friends, and they could follow their own interests as they explored their environment. The service supported children's movement freely between indoor and outdoor spaces; there were few disruptions to their play as these transitions were planned for and supported. This ensured children could lead their play and benefitted

from extended periods outdoors.

Children would benefit from increased access to a wider variety of natural and open-ended resources. While we observed some creative play, such as children playing with the shells in the slime, these opportunities were limited. Expanding the range and availability of such materials could further support the development of children's curiosity, imagination, and problem-solving skills during both indoor and outdoor play.

Staff provided children with opportunities to develop early language, literacy, and numeracy skills through play. The service used stories indoors and outdoors, mark-making with various materials, numbers, and measuring equipment in areas, and children joined in with action songs. As a result, children explored language, numeracy, and literacy through play.

The planning processes were still in the early stages of development. Staff had been recording observations of the children, but the quality of these observations varied. While some staff had noted down the children's activities, they did not consistently identify the learning that had taken place or how they would support the children to make progress. Staff should develop their skills in recording observations of the children. There was also no evaluation of the impact of the planned learning. This would help them to identify the children's achievements and plan the next steps for their development.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.

Children experienced a well-lit setting with suitable ventilation. There was some homely touches in the environment with comfortable cushions. While there were displays, they were not of children's work; most displays were too high for children to see. We suggested that, where possible, displays should be lowered to children's height. This would help children feel that they matter and build their self-esteem.

Children had dedicated play spaces and access to outdoor space, with resources to meet their needs and stage of development. Parents strongly agreed that their children had access to a good range of quality toys and play materials. Play spaces reflected some children's interests and preferences, and staff supported children during play. For example, when children were interested in the water wall, the staff member filled up the water tray. This helped children to learn through play and develop their hand-eye coordination.

Staff understood their roles and responsibilities regarding infection prevention and control. For example, they supported children in washing their hands at appropriate times. This minimised the risk of cross infection, keeping children and staff safe and healthy.

Staff engaged with the local community through various activities with the children. They went on local walks, visited the apple tree garden where they enjoyed running around and riding bikes, and grew vegetables in the garden. They also took trips to the shops and Dalscone Farm, which helped them develop a sense of belonging to their local community. Parents shared: "My child has visited the garden many times and is often taken on trips to local parks or to visit shops for art supplies or books;" and "Exploring the garden, plants and bugs. Gross motor with the bikes and trikes and climbing, colour exploration in the wooden hut. Been on many walks in the local community, finding ducks and Dalscone Farm for a trip."

Facilities should provide children with a safe, clean environment while promoting privacy and dignity, and ensuring the best possible outcomes. The changing unit and storage beneath the sink need to be a wipeable surface to prevent the spread of infection.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children; therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

Throughout the inspection, management and staff engaged well and responded to advice and encouragement when suggestions were made. We found good relationships within the team, and management and staff were committed to the development of the service. The team worked well together to establish a shared vision to deliver the best outcomes for children and families. As a result, they were well placed to continually develop the service.

The views of children and families were regularly sought to inform the development of the service. Daily conversations with children and regular consultation enabled children to express their interests, likes, and dislikes. This was reflected in how the play environment was set up to take account of children's interests. This helped children feel valued and included in the service.

Management and staff regularly communicated with parents through the online family app, emails, and daily chats. The service encouraged parental involvement through 'stay and play', 'PEEP' sessions and a lending library. This helped create positive relationships where children and families felt heard and respected. Parents commented: "The nursery actively seeks feedback from both parents and children. I've been asked to complete questionnaires and take part in discussions about how the service can improve, and I feel that my opinions are genuinely valued. It's reassuring to know that our voices help shape the experiences and care provided;" and "The nursery always asks for feedback."

Staff evaluated their practices effectively by using the Care Inspectorate's 'Quality Framework for Daycare of Children, Childminding, and School-Aged Childcare'. This process allowed them to identify strengths and areas that needed improvement. The identified areas for enhancement were documented in a realistic and achievable improvement plan, which was regularly reviewed and assessed. This approach supported both the manager and staff in delivering care, play, and learning tailored to the needs of the children and families using the service.

Quality assurance processes, including regular monitoring and self-evaluation, helped to identify and address any issues quickly. The manager has worked with staff to model best practices and reflect on the environment, children's experiences, and staff practices. This collaboration led to positive outcomes for both children and families.

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

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

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment.

Most staff were warm, welcoming, and caring, and the nursery had a positive ethos. The nursery was appropriately staffed, and staff were suitably deployed throughout the day to meet children's needs. Throughout the service, there was a focus on the children as individuals.

Staff worked well together as a team, and their different skills and knowledge complemented each other. Staff moved in response to children's requests, for example, when children wanted to access outdoor play, this was supported. This resulted in positive interactions with the children. A staff member told us, "We have good leadership and supportive staff who work well together."

Overall, staff positioned themselves appropriately to ensure maximum supervision both indoors and outdoors. Staff communicated well with each other, transitions were planned, and children were familiar with the daily routine. They said goodbye to the children before going for their lunch. This supported better outcomes for children.

The management effectively supported staff by spending regular time on the nursery floor. This helped to build positive working relationships and allowed time for role-modelling and professional discussion. Staff were happy, engaged, and shared tasks through working as a team. Staff breaks did not impact the children's play experiences.

Staff had time to reflect, discuss children individually, and plan for the following day as a team. Staff would benefit from full staff meetings; this would support a formal way to stay on task and reflect on what is going well and what could improve, giving staff a set time to focus on areas that need to be discussed and improved.

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good

How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good

How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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