Little Wonderland Nursery Ltd
Day Care of Children

Ground Floor Suite Lochar House
Dumfries
DG1 3NU

Telephone: 07702046940

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
24 September 2026

Service provided by:
Little Wonderland Nursery Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2023000343

Service no:
CS2024000332

About the service

Little Wonderland Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 24 children aged from 2 years to those not yet attending primary school full time, with no more than 15 children aged between 2 and 3 years.

Little Wonderland Nursery is situated in a residential area of Dumfries, with good links to transport routes, local shops and schools and other places of interest.

It is based on the ground floor and has a secure, outdoor area to the rear of the property where children can choose to play.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday, 22 September 2026, Wednesday 23 September 2026 and Thursday 24 September 2026, when feedback was given.

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 registration information, information submitted by the service and any other intelligence gathered through notifications. This was the nursery's first inspection following registration.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spent time with children using the service
- received eight completed questionnaire from families
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- spoke with owner/manager and 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 is committed to continuously improving the quality of care and learning through strong leadership, regular self-evaluation, and meaningful engagement with children, families and staff. Parents are listened to, involved in decision-making, and can be confident that feedback is used to make positive changes for children.
- Children and families benefit from warm, caring relationships and personalised support that promotes wellbeing, inclusion and positive outcomes. Staff know children well, work closely with families, and are committed to helping every child feel safe, valued and supported to thrive.
- Children are having fun and are happy to be at nursery. Experiences build on their interests and needs, supporting them to be curious, creative and develop skills for life.
- Children are cared for in a safe, welcoming and well-maintained environment where their wellbeing is promoted through effective safety measures, responsive leadership and ongoing improvements to the nursery environment.

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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	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 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 had a clear vision, values and aims (VVA) statement which reflected its ethos and provided families with a clear understanding of what they could expect. The child-friendly "WONDER" framework linked to the nursery's identity and guided practice. Leaders recognised that the VVA was due for review and were considering how they could meaningfully involve children and families, so that it remained relevant to them.

There was a strong commitment across the staff team to providing high quality experiences for children and families. Management and staff demonstrated a reflective approach to practice and were able to talk about their strengths and areas for improvement. A comprehensive monitoring calendar was in place, which linked to the quality framework themes and supported effective quality assurance processes. We found evidence of changes being made as a result of these processes, including changes to the environment.

Self-evaluation was well embedded within the setting. Staff used a variety of approaches, including Care Inspectorate practice resources and recognised evaluation tools, to support reflection and improvement. Staff told us that they felt involved in the self-evaluation process and valued opportunities to contribute their ideas and feedback. While they felt listened to and respected, some recognised that protected time for reflection would further strengthen their contribution to improvement activities.

Feedback was actively sought and valued from children, families and visiting professionals. Parents described feeling well informed and involved through a variety of consultation methods, including surveys, online communication and targeted feedback. They gave us examples of times when suggestions had been acted on and recognised the setting's willingness to adapt support to meet individual children's needs. Children's views were also gathered and used to inform improvements about the setting.

An improvement plan was in place which reflected priorities identified through self-evaluation, quality assurance and feedback. Families were kept informed about identified priorities and progress towards improvements. We observed effective improvement methodologies being used and discussed ways of strengthening these further to support more robust evaluation of whether changes had achieved the intended outcomes.

There was a strong commitment to staff learning and development. Training opportunities were supported, and staff described how professional learning had enhanced their understanding of children's individual needs and informed their practice. Staff were encouraged to reflect on their learning, although more consistent completion of reflection records would strengthen the impact of professional development.

Staff told us that they felt well supported by management. Formal and informal monitoring of practice took place, however, evidence showed that some practice observations and feedback were not routinely documented. We discussed how recording these processes would provide a clearer record of professional development and progress, particularly for less experienced staff.

Safe recruitment practices were evident within the staff files sampled. Appropriate checks had been undertaken, including identity and right to work verification. New staff were well supported through induction and mentoring arrangements. Staff who were new to the setting spoke positively about the support they had received and felt confident seeking guidance when required.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces — 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 were being cared for in a secure, welcoming and well-maintained environment. Effective measures were in place to ensure that they were safe, including controlled access to the nursery. The environment was calm and organised, with arrangements in place for maintaining resources and removing damaged items. Management had identified areas for improvement and responded promptly to issues we had identified, including enhancing the lighting in the quiet room to support children's wellbeing and improve mealtime experiences.

The layout of resources enabled children to make choices and move freely within the setting, and we identified some opportunities to improve this further. Current arrangements for meals, quiet play and rest were limited by available space. Management were currently considering changes which will create a larger, more flexible area to provide improved opportunities for relaxation, sleep and sensory experiences.

Infection prevention and control measures were generally effective. Children demonstrated good handwashing practices and staff had completed relevant training. A small number of environmental and practice issues were identified, including damaged signage, the need to ensure staff follow guidance regarding nail hygiene when handling food and ensuring all staff acknowledge and are familiar with updated risk assessments.

Children were developing an awareness of safety and risk. They spoke confidently about staying safe in the community and were beginning to contribute to assessments of their environment. Building on this, child-friendly checklists could further increase children's involvement in identifying and managing risks.

While the environment was generally tidy, we discussed opportunities to strengthen ownership of specific areas and involve children more fully in tidying and caring for their surroundings. Management were also aware of the impact that staff cleaning responsibilities could have on time available for planning and preparation and had plans in place to address this. In addition, plans to create a dedicated staff space should further support staff wellbeing.

Feedback from parents was very positive, with families describing the nursery as safe, well-maintained and continually improving. Parents highlighted recent environmental improvements, including the installation of an additional safety gate, which helped them feel even more confident about their child's safety.

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 clearly enjoyed their time at nursery. They arrived confidently, quickly becoming absorbed in play and exploring the environment independently. Children moved freely throughout the setting, making choices about where and how they spent their time. Most children chose to be outdoors for most of the day, making the most of the rich outdoor experiences available.

Children benefitted from a wide range of opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and interests through play. Staff knew children well and were responsive to their interests, generally following children's lead and supporting their ideas. We saw examples of effective open-ended questions which encouraged children to think and solve problems. However, this practice was not yet consistent across the team, resulting in some missed opportunities to extend children's learning further.

Children were highly engaged, and motivated in their play. Staff had successfully identified children's interests in vehicles, movement and the flow of water, and had planned experiences that extended these interests. During our visit, children worked together to create ramps and pipe systems, testing ideas and solving problems. While these experiences provided valuable opportunities for exploration, there were some missed opportunities to further develop literacy and numeracy skills.

Children experienced a good balance of child-led and adult-led learning. However, there were times when adults directed children's play, particularly when there was a perceived risk, and this had the potential to interrupt the flow of their play. Staff planned seasonal and topic-based experiences while remaining responsive to emerging interests. We discussed how children's current interests could provide the context for broader curricular learning, helping to ensure all areas of the curriculum are consistently explored and documented.

We discussed how planning approaches could be strengthened by linking children's interests and planned learning opportunities to curriculum outcomes. Staff were currently reviewing planning processes following the introduction of a new digital platform. Planning was informed by children's interests, observations, parental feedback and the curriculum. From the records sampled, we could see that children's next steps were meaningful, achievable and regularly reviewed, supporting effective tracking of progress and sharing of information with families.

Positive relationships supported children's learning and wellbeing. Children were learning important life skills including sharing, taking turns, being kind and considering the feelings of others. They generally played together well and were respectful of one another. We discussed opportunities to further promote responsibility and independence by encourage children to take a greater role in tidying resources and caring for their environment.

Staff interacted warmly with children, modelling language, extending vocabulary and listening to their ideas. Visual supports were displayed throughout the nursery and staff were developing their use of these resources. However, visuals were not always positioned where children could easily access or refer to them, and we did not consistently see them being used to support communication and understanding during our visit.

Feedback from children and parents was highly positive. Children spoke enthusiastically about their learning, outdoor experiences and friendships. Parents described the nursery as highly child-centred and highlighted the wide range of learning opportunities provided in response to children's interests. They valued the strong emphasis on outdoor learning, exploration and adventure, and recognised staff's responsiveness in planning meaningful experiences that reflected their curiosity and ideas.

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 and their families were warmly welcomed into the setting. Children arrived happy, settled quicky into play and demonstrated strong attachments to staff and friendships with other children. Positive, respectful relationships between staff and families were evident throughout the inspection, with parents encouraged to engage in nursery life through daily conversations, stay and play sessions and regular involvement in their child's learning. As a result, staff knew children and their families well and were responsive to their individual circumstances, needs and wellbeing.

Children's care and support needs were effectively identified and review through personal plans, which were regularly updated in partnership with families. The recent move to online plans had strengthened opportunities for parental involvement. Staff worked closely with families and other professionals to make sure that each child received the support they needed. They used information from children's plans to understand their needs and interests, and created personalised strategies to support them. For example, staff had created personalised social stories to help children understand and cope with changes in their lives. Parents spoke positively about the progress their children had made and valued the individual support provided.

Most transitions throughout the day were well managed, with children prepared for changes and supported to move between experiences. Staff were currently reviewing aspects of the daily routine, particularly around mealtimes, to improve children's experiences.

Children were offered healthy and nutritious meals and snacks and were generally relaxed and unhurried during mealtimes. Children were able to choose when to go for their meals and snacks, helping to promote wellbeing and a positive experience. However, practice in supporting children who required additional support was not yet fully consistent across the staff team. We identified further opportunities to promote children's independence at mealtimes. Generally, children were encouraged to pour drinks, serve food and use cutlery independently. However, the organisation of resources sometimes limited opportunities for children to take greater responsibility for these tasks. Most children were confident in serving themselves and taking on helper roles and would benefit from more opportunities to further develop their independence and self-help skills.

Appropriate medication procedures were in place, with medicines stored safely and staff aware of their responsibilities. Staff had completed child protection training and demonstrated an understanding of safeguarding procedures, providing assurance that children were protected from harm.

Feedback from parents was very positive. Parents described staff as caring, approachable and highly committed to children's wellbeing. They valued the strong relationships established with families, the collaborative approach to reviewing care plans and the genuine interest staff showed in supporting each child's development. Parents consistently reported that children were happy, confident and eager to attend the nursery.

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 thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
Children experience high quality spaces	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

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