

# Gatehouse Nursery Day Care of Children

Gatehouse Primary School  
Gatehouse of Fleet  
Castle Douglas  
DG7 2JX

Telephone: 01557 814 262

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
1 September 2022

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

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003501

**Service no:**  
CS2003015482

## About the service

Gatehouse nursery may provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 35 children aged from 2 years to not yet of an age to attend primary school at any one time. Of those 35 no more than 10 are aged 2 to under 3 years.

The nursery is located in a residential area in the town of Gatehouse of Fleet, Dumfries and Galloway. The service is close to local shops, parks and other amenities. Children are accommodated in two indoor playrooms and an enclosed outdoor play space. Children can also access an outdoor garden and play area within the grounds of the primary school.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 29 August 2022. The 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 information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with some people using the service and three of their family.
- spoke with four staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents

## Key messages

Children experienced warm, nurturing care from a responsive staffing team which helped them feel happy, secure and safe.

Staff promoted a positive team ethos and were respectful in their interactions with each other and the children.

The staffing team, in partnership with the children, should continue with plans to develop the indoor playrooms and enclosed outdoor space.

## 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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

## How good is our care, play and learning?

**5 - Very Good**

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

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

On the day of inspection children were happy, settled and having fun with their peers. They experienced warm, nurturing care from the staffing team which supported their health and wellbeing. Staff were kind and respectful towards children, taking time to listen and respond to them. This helped children to feel secure and valued.

Children experienced a sociable lunchtime with peers as they could choose who they would like to sit beside. Children were able to self-serve cold snacks and drinks in line with family's preferences. Children's independence and life skills could be further enhanced by opportunities to set up the table with tablecloths, cutlery and cups while they wait for hot meals to be served by staff. Water was available throughout the day for children to remain hydrated.

Personal Learning Plans (PLP) were in place for each child which were shared regularly with families. Information was gathered within personal plans that supported meeting children's needs. For example, their likes, dislikes and interests. Children's learning was recorded and shared with parents through e-learning journals. The manager monitored children's PLPs to ensure a consistent approach to recording achievements and identifying next steps in learning.

One parent told us "I enjoy the app the nursery use to share information as they also send lovely photos and videos too".

We sampled the safeguarding policy and found these to be in line with current guidance. Staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. They had recently attended child protection training and knew how to address any concerns.

We sampled the medication policy and consent forms and found these were in line with current guidance which ensured the health and wellbeing of the children accessing the setting.

### 1.3 Play and learning

Children were actively leading their play which ensured the pace of the day was led by them and this was supported by staff who skilfully interacted with children to promote their creativity and curiosity. They used effective questioning to extend children's thinking, learning and play opportunities.

Children's physical and emotional wellbeing was promoted by a warm and caring staffing team, who knew the children and their individual personalities well. We observed a balance of adult directed and freely chosen activities which were supporting children to develop key skills.

Children were confident approaching staff for support, help and reassurance at appropriate times. One parents told us "my child loves the staff and they know all of her needs".

Access to the wider community continued to be developed in line with easing restrictions, the children engaged in a daily mile walk around the local community. Families had been able to attend the setting for sports day, a jubilee street party and a leavers event for children transitioning to primary 1. The team have also organised an open day for September which will allow parents to meet the team and explore the nursery environment.

We suggested an internet usage policy was updated and consent forms be sent to families. This is in line with keeping children safe online practice guidance.

## How good is our setting?

### 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant positive impact on children's experiences.

Children experienced a setting that was clean, inviting and welcoming for the children. The room had natural light and was well ventilated with open windows and doors. Children were confident moving around the play room and between the indoors and outdoors spaces. This showed us children felt safe and secure in the nursery.

Children could lead their play as they could easily access toys and activities at their level. Tubs and boxes were labelled with pictures to further support children's independence. Natural, open ended materials were available to stimulate children's curiosity and extend their play. Loose parts play was also available at a provocation table and throughout the environment.

Children could move equipment between the indoors and outdoors which ensured play and learning was not interrupted.

We discussed the lay out of the playroom on the day of inspection and have suggested the staff team, in partnership with the children, review the resources and equipment available to allow children attending more space to extend their play whilst staying safe. We also suggested that children would benefit from more cosy areas to relax.

Children were supported to engage in risk taking, problem-solving, working together and physical play in both the indoor and outdoor spaces. Free flow access between the indoors and enclosed outdoor space enhanced children's play and learning while supporting their health and wellbeing

Staff worked well together to identify and reduce risks for children in the setting. They ensured children were always accounted for by regularly undertaking head counts and updating the board within the playroom. Children were confident in the safety measures when accessing the community. One child told us about holding hands and wearing their "visy vests". The team had recently bought a purple elephant that they were going to use to teach children about the care inspectorate SIMOA guidance in a fun and stimulating way. One parent told us "we feel that it is a safe environment which allows the children to develop their different abilities and thrive".

Infection prevention and control practices needed reviewed to prevent the spread of infection. For example, toilet doors leading to playrooms should be kept closed and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be stored in a sealed, wipeable container in any changing facility, however, staff undertook daily cleaning of the spaces and equipment utilised by the children and supported children to frequently wash their hands.

Risk assessments were in place for areas accessed by the children. Mitigation measures were well considered and realistic.

## How good is our leadership?

**5 - Very Good**

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

A clear vision, values and aims had been recently reviewed and updated for the service in collaboration with the children and their families. Children were supported by a staff team who embedded the nurseries values into their practice which ensured children felt welcomed, safe and included. Staff spoke passionately about working with families to help every child reach their full potential.

Staff were committed to providing children with quality early learning and childcare at the nursery. Outcomes and positive experiences for children were the focus of any changes or improvements in the setting. As a team, staff systematically evaluated and reflected on activities they offered, the environment and range of resources available taking account good practice guidance and children's preferences.

Aspirations for the nursery were shared by all staff members and supported by the manager which showed us the service had a very good capacity for change. All members of the team inputted into the improvement plan for the service and were committed to their role and shared responsibility for the process. Staff were motivated to continue improving the nursery for each individual child and had realistic targets on how to achieve these. For example, the staff team were developing plans to improve the outdoor environment and resources.

The manager of the service was visible, personable and approachable to children, their families and staff. This created a positive environment which focused on relationship and communication, creating conditions where people felt confident to discuss ideas, improvements and issues. The manager was organised, accessible and positively influenced the delivery of the service. All parents who completed our questionnaire agreed the manager was visible and approachable.

The manager, in partnership with the staffing team, had introduced a range of quality assurance and audit processes which supported the monitoring and development of the service. These included floor books, online journals, self-evaluations tools and calendars, tracking systems, team meetings and questionnaires to parents. The service also regularly gathered feedback from children which was used to plan the development and improvement of the service.

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

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

Children were supported in a nursery that was appropriately staffed to meet their individual health, wellbeing and safety needs. Continuity of care and effective communication was promoted by the manager and staff team which minimised the impact of staff breaks on children during their time at the nursery.

Staff were proactive and flexible in their deployments throughout the day, they followed the children between the indoors and outdoors, which ensured children led their play and engaged in free flow opportunities whilst remaining safe. The manager acknowledged some of the barriers that exist in rural locations with transport and accommodated requests from families to alleviate any additional pressures.

Effective teamwork ensured care and support was consistent because people worked well together to identify achievements and next steps for the children in their care. Staff spoke positively about their roles and told us they felt listened to and able to share their ideas with colleagues and managers.

Children and their families experienced a warm, caring and nurturing setting as good working relationships and effective communication had been established between the team and manager. We found staff worked well together, and they were respectful in their interactions with each other, creating a positive ethos and role models for the children.

Supervision and quality assurances in place allowed time for reflection on practice, skills and training needs. Staff received feedback from the manager at regular periods with training opportunities being made available if required. Staff also took responsibility for their own professional development and embraced any new opportunities to learn. Staff members advised they felt comfortable approaching the manager for support or to raise concerns.

## What the service has done to meet any requirements we made at or since the last inspection

### Requirements

#### Requirement 1

By 31 March 2019, the provider must ensure that the care and support needs of all children are being effectively met. In order to achieve this, the provider must ensure:

- that a vigorous and robust monitoring and supervision schedule has been established
- that effective self evaluation processes can demonstrate the impact on outcomes for children throughout the nursery.

**This requirement was made on 13 September 2018.**

#### Action taken on previous requirement

The service and new manager have introduced quality assurance, monitoring and self evaluation processes to ensure the care and support needs of children are being met effectively.

We are satisfied with the progress that has been made for this requirement.

**Met - within timescales**

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).



## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very 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?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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