

# North West Community Campus Nursery Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
19 March 2026

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

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003501

**Service no:**  
CS2018365296

## About the service

North West Community Campus Nursery is in Dumfries. They are registered to provide a daycare of children's service to a maximum of 70 children aged from two years to an age not yet attending primary school. Of whom, no more than 10 are aged two to under three.

Children have access to a large playroom that offers direct access to an enclosed garden. A smaller playroom offers younger children a play space that can be accessed from the main playroom.

The service is part of a large community campus that offers primary and secondary education, is close to green spaces, local amenities and can be reached by public transport links.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 18-19 March 2026 between 08:30 and 16:30. This 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke to and spent time with children using the service
- spoke with seven families during our visit and received 13 completed questionnaires
- received nine questionnaires from staff
- spoke with staff and the management team
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- 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.

During this inspection we 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.

This information will be anonymised and analysed to help inform our future work with services.

## Key messages

- Children were settled, happy and engaged in play across all spaces.
- Staff engaged in professional development using best practice. This had a significant impact on children's engagement and interactions.
- Leadership fostered a strong, shared vision and values that created a positive, nurturing ethos.
- Staff felt supported, empowered, and confident to improve outcomes for children and families through meaningful reflections and continuous evaluation.
- Children and families were at the heart of the service and their views influenced change.
- Quality assurance systems were embedded and supported change
- Improvement priorities were meaningful and focused on children's outcomes.
- Children and families benefitted from a skilled, stable and highly valued staff team that supported continuity of care.

## 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

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.

### Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The service worked collaboratively with children, families and staff to develop their vision, values and aims. This inclusive approach created a shared understanding of their vision that focussed on fostering positive relationships, strong connections and nurture for their learning community. Children designed the nursery logo, highlighting their involvement mattered. The values of the nursery were embedded in daily routines and interactions, contributing to the positive, caring ethos. All families agreed that they were involved in meaningful ways to help develop the service. This demonstrated commitment to promoting high aspirations for children, families and the wider community. As a result, families felt included and their views informed change.

The leadership team supported staff effectively through periods of change, helping to build a culture of trust, connection, and autonomy. Staff spoke positively about the service manager's consistent vision and inclusive approach, sharing that they felt confident, valued, and empowered to contribute to improvement work. This resulted in a strong sense of shared responsibility for driving positive developments by a motivated team.

Self evaluation processes were evident and meaningful. Floor books showed staff regularly engaged in reflective practice, evaluated children's learning and planned for positive change. Staff described continuous reflection as a fundamental part of their work and told us how this contributed to improved outcomes for children.

Children and families were central in developing the service. They were regularly consulted, and their views informed ongoing developments and family learning offerings. For example, families were regularly invited into the service to take part in experiences that supported children's play and learning. This included gathering their views on the work the service were doing on children's rights and 'Think equal' project. Families comments included, we are "Always asked if there are any suggestions for improvements", "There are often surveys and opportunities for us to have our say within nursery" and we are "Provided with opportunities to voice ideas and opinions". This meant the views of children and families were valued.

A robust quality assurance calendar was in place and used consistently to support the smooth and effective operation of the service. This included monitoring training needs, moderation of children's journals and setting clear expectations. As a team this ensured learning and engagement supported consistent area standards for children. The service had a clear vision to further enhance this through planned peer observations to further develop reflective practice.

Improvement priorities had been developed in partnership with staff and families. They clearly focussed on improving outcomes and experiences. Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of these priorities and how they linked to the breadth of learning opportunities available. The focus on ensuring challenge and support for all children reflected a commitment to high quality play and learning. We encouraged the service to continue reviewing the indoor and outdoor environments through the lens of the child to support further refinement of provision.

A skilled and stable team had been retained over time, which supported the continuity of care for children. Staff who had joined the service spoke positively about their induction experience and support received. Families told us they knew the team well. Comments included "nursery are fantastic! I have nothing but great words to say, amazing", "Couldn't ask for more from the nursery staff, thank you all", "The staff go above and beyond" and "The nursery staff are the best I have ever experienced." As a result, families had confidence and trust in the team that fostered positive connections.

## 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.

### Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

Children were engaged in play across the indoor and outdoor environments. They were curious and involved in a wide range of play experiences that promoted high levels of engagement, problem solving and sparked curiosity, supported by staff. For example, staff identified where it was appropriate to intervene to scaffold learning. We encouraged the team to further develop these opportunities consistently to ensure a breadth of learning for all children.

Communication boards and visual aids were used effectively to promote understanding and support children's decision making. Staff used decision boards to help children understand routines and make choices and further supported this with the use of verbal cues. This demonstrated a clear understanding of how children develop communication, language and literacy skills.

Across both environments children were encouraged to make choices about play and learning. In the 2-3 playroom opportunities to independently choose outdoor play were restricted due to lack of direct outdoor access. Staff tried to manage this effectively. We encouraged them to consider how outdoors could be accessed further during the session as some children had outdoor play as an individual next step to support their learning and development.

Children had time, space, and support from staff to lead their play and direct their learning. Staff used effective questioning during quality interactions to extend thinking. For example, children experimented with ways to transport water down the hill. Staff observed, asked questions and allowed time for children to think, plan and carry out their ideas. This supported deeper learning, problem solving and enquiry.

Children engaged in a rich range of imaginative, creative, and problem solving play both indoors and outdoors. Outdoor provision, in particular, offered valuable opportunities to develop gross motor skills, collaborate with peers, and experiment. Children designed obstacle courses and used the climbing frame to move their bodies, learning about risks as they estimated how close the crates needed to be for steps. As a result, children were engaged in sustained play for periods of time.

Promoting language, literacy and numeracy through play was evident in the spaces and interactions. We observed children interested in print, mark making, enjoying songs and stories and measuring and counting as part of their play. Quality interactions and opportunities for discussions with staff through routines further supported this. As a result, children were supported to make progress at a pace that was right for them.

Children benefitted from regular opportunities to engage and learn in their wider community. They told us about their visits to the 'Big House', walks to the bridge and the fun they had looking at the different types of traffic. Families also told us about the experiences their children spoke about following trips out. This was a positive connection with services in their wider community.

Planning approaches were clear, meaningful, and led by children's interests. Each area of the environment was thoughtfully planned, with staff identifying and tracking learning to ensure children experienced a broad and balanced curriculum. Learning was documented effectively in the 'big books', recording children's voices, ideas, and examples of their work. Staff used these well to evaluate learning. The books provided children with valuable opportunities to revisit experiences, discuss their learning, and consolidate understanding. We encouraged the service to ensure the big books were positioned so children could access them independently.

Observations of learning and progress were recorded in individual journals and regularly shared with families online. Monthly next steps were identified and revisited to track significant learning and this supported a clear overview of each child's development. Families told us they had opportunities to meet with key workers to discuss their child's development, agree next steps and work together to support progress.

The service had identified further improvement work was needed to ensure observations clearly identified language of learning and progression. This reflective approach indicated a strong commitment to continuous improvement.

## 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.

### Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support

Staff demonstrated a strong understanding and commitment to building nurturing relationships. Families agreed they had good relationships with the team caring for their child. Comments included, "staff are welcoming, supportive and caring", "Staff are all friendly and welcoming and genuinely care for the children" and "Very lovely, noticeably got a good bond with the kids, very caring and attentive". As a result, families had built positive, trusting relationships with the team.

Children experienced warm and nurturing care from staff and peers. Interactions were kind and attuned to children's needs. The service were part of the IFLE project that supported staff to reflect on interaction styles across key areas of learning and connect with children during play opportunities. Engagement and reflections of this project, alongside other areas of improvement priorities had a positive impact on high quality engagement and interactions. We encouraged the service to continue ensuring consistency in the language used with children to further strengthen nurturing practice across the team.

Staff were clear about the importance of building positive relationships with the whole family to promote health, wellbeing and a sense of belonging. Staff took time each day to talk with families and this created a warm and welcoming ethos. As a result, families were very involved and participated in the life of the learning community.

Children's interactions with each other were mostly positive and contributed to smooth transitions and shared experiences. For example, when the younger children joined the outdoor area, older children were observed supporting them sensitively, encouraging participation, guiding and caring for them.

Mealtimes were relaxed and sociable with staff taking time to eat with children and engage in meaningful discussions. This daily routine offered nearly all children opportunities to make choices. They were able to self-serve from a selection of foods at lunch time in the 3-5 room which promoted independence and ownership. We encouraged the team to offer younger children more opportunities to select foods they wanted during mealtimes. The team were responsive to this suggestion and started to make changes. They told us the following day children had enjoyed this experience. We discussed how this could be extended to promote greater independence, such as children having more opportunities to handle kitchen utensils and prepare snacks. These opportunities would further support learning about safety and develop important life skills.

Personal plans were regularly reviewed with families and the one page overviews provided staff with information on how to meet each child's needs linked to the wellbeing indicators. The use of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) within plans reflected good practice and helped families understand the purpose of information gathering, reinforcing a rights based approach. Strategies within children's plans were mostly clear and relevant. We encouraged the service to consider how strategies are monitored to ensure they remain meaningful and supportive. For example, when children require additional time in busy environments to develop social skills, plans should clearly describe how this could be supported in practice. Families felt fully involved in developing and reviewing their child's personal plan. Comments included "Always face to face conversations regarding care plans, updates, improvement on learning" and "I have had meetings with my child's key worker to discuss anything I would like to be focussed on and get regular updates too". This ensured the service had relevant information to meet children's needs.

Transitions were a significant strength and demonstrated children were at the heart of the service. For example, staff made effective use of the provision to meet the needs of children. This included enhanced transitions and a more gradual, supportive approach to moving between rooms. Effective planning and opportunities for short visits before starting nursery ensured children were able to explore the environment, meet staff, and begin to build relationships. As a result, children's individual needs had been carefully considered.

Connections with the learning community nurtured early relationships and further strengthened positive engagement. Well planned family learning opportunities were shaped by ongoing consultation and engagement that reflected interests and priorities. For example, well-attended book bug groups and family learning sessions demonstrated this strong partnership. Staff effectively modelled how literacy and numeracy could be promoted through songs, stories and drama during groups. As a result, children's learning and development were well supported, fostering meaningful connections between nursery and home.

## 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

<b>Leadership</b>	<b>5 - Very Good</b>
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good
<b>Children play and learn</b>	<b>5 - Very Good</b>
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
<b>Children are supported to achieve</b>	<b>5 - Very Good</b>
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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