

## Bower Busy Bees ELC (Early Learning Centre) Day Care of Children

The Stables  
Bower Community Centre  
Bower  
Wick  
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Telephone: 01955 661 269

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
28 February 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Bower Busy Bees ELC

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003001744

**Service no:**  
CS2003008548

## About the service

Bower Busy Bees Early Learning and Childcare is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 12 Children aged from two years to not yet attending primary school.

The service operates within converted farm steadings in the community of Bower, Caithness. The accommodation has two main rooms and an upstairs room. Across the courtyard the children can access a large outside natural play space with extensive resources which supports curiosity and creativity.

The Nursery is committee led and works in partnership with The Highland Council to provide funded early learning and childcare.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced follow up inspection which took place on Wednesday 26 February 2025. 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 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 children using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

## Key messages

- Since the last inspection, the service had reviewed their recruitment and selection procedures. New employees were recruited in a safe manner, in line with best practice guidance.
- Effective arrangements were now in place, in the absence of the designated first aider.
- Sleep arrangements still had the potential to compromise children's safety and wellbeing.
- Staff had undertaken taken some training appropriate to their role. However the impact of this was not consistently evident in staff practice.
- Robust quality assurance systems had not yet been developed. This resulted in children experiencing inconsistent care, play and learning.
- The manager and staff had reviewed and made changes to staff deployment, which meant there was some progress made in relation to improving children's experiences. However staff deployment did not consistently meet children's individual needs.

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

### Requirements

#### Requirement 1

By 29 November 2024, the provider must ensure that children are safe and protected. In order to achieve this the provider must ensure that effective processes are in place to ensure employees are recruited in a safe manner in line with best practice.

This is in order to comply with regulation 9 fitness of employees of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210). (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011, SSI 2011/210.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards, which state that: 'I am confident that people who support me have been appropriately and safely recruited' (HSCS 4.24).

**This requirement was made on 31 October 2024.**

#### Action taken on previous requirement

Since the last inspection, the service had reviewed their recruitment and selection procedures. New employees were recruited in a safe manner, in line with best practice guidance. Staff did not start working with children until two written references and protecting vulnerable groups checks had been undertaken and were in place. As a result children were safe and protected from potential risks.

**Met - within timescales**

## Requirement 2

By 7 February 2025, to improve outcomes for children and ensure they are safe, the provider must, at a minimum: ensure effective contingency arrangements are in place, in the absence of the designated first aider.

This is in order to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 (SSI 2011/2010) 4. (1)(a) make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

**This requirement was made on 31 October 2024.**

### Action taken on previous requirement

Effective arrangements were now in place, in the absence of the designated first aider. All staff working in the service are now first aid trained. As a result children's safety is promoted.

**Met - within timescales**

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

## Areas for improvement

### Previous area for improvement 1

To ensure children's safety the provider should review and make appropriate changes to the sleep arrangements within the service.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

**This area for improvement was made on 31 October 2024.**

### Action taken since then

Sleep arrangements still had the potential to compromise children's safety and wellbeing. For example, effective ventilation was still not in place, which increased the risk of children overheating when sleeping.

**This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.**

### Previous area for improvement 2

To effectively deliver high quality play and learning experiences, the manager and staff should access training appropriate to their role and apply the training to their practice.

This should include but is not limited to:

- a) how to complete meaningful high-quality observations
- b) using best practice guidance to support high quality interactions and play experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

**This area for improvement was made on 31 October 2024.**

#### Action taken since then

Staff had undertaken some training appropriate to their role. However, the impact of this was not consistently evident in staff practice.

The service was in the early stages of developing how observations and next steps in learning are recorded. Observations of individuals' learning and development were often descriptive. This meant they were not yet consistently capturing the knowledge, understanding or skills individual children were developing. Next steps were not yet consistently identified to support children's ongoing progress effectively. The manager and staff should now consider how they could make more effective use of progress tracking systems. This could enable individual children to develop at a pace suitable for them.

**This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.**

### Previous area for improvement 3

The provider should ensure that children are protected from risk of harm. This should include but is not limited to:

- a) ensuring effective systems are in place to ensure the environment is a safe place for children
- b) staff are skilled in identifying and addressing risks and implement this consistently in their practice.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is safe and secure' (HSCS 5.17).

**This area for improvement was made on 31 October 2024.**

#### Action taken since then

Effective systems were not yet in place to ensure children's safety when playing outdoors. The manager advised that work was planned to erect a new perimeter fence in the woodland area. However, the date for completion was not yet confirmed. We asked the manager to review and consider what alternative arrangements could be implemented until a more permanent solution was in place.

Overall most staff were effective at identifying and removing risks within the environment. However, this was not yet consistently applied in practice.

**This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.**

## Previous area for improvement 4

To improve outcomes for children and families, the manager should ensure that a strong ethos of continuous improvement is established.

This should include but not limited to:

- a) developing robust quality assurance systems
- b) implementing effective audits
- c) developing monitoring processes to support a cycle of improvement.

This is in order to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes' (HSCS 4.19).

**This area for improvement was made on 31 October 2024.**

### Action taken since then

Limited progress had been made in relation to this area for improvement. A strong ethos of continuous improvement had not yet been established. Robust quality assurance systems had not yet been developed. Ineffective monitoring resulted in children experiencing inconsistent care, play and learning. We discussed ways in which the service could strengthen their processes. For example, linking support and feedback to formalised observation of staff practice and monitoring of children's experiences and outcomes.

**This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.**

## Previous area for improvement 5

To ensure children are safe and receive high quality experiences at all times the provider and manager should as a minimum, review and make appropriate changes to staff deployment, to improve experiences for children.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes' (HSCS 3.14).

**This area for improvement was made on 31 October 2024.**

### Action taken since then

The manager and staff had reviewed and made changes to staff deployment, which meant that some progress had been made in relation to improving children's experiences. However, staff deployment did not consistently meet children's needs. On occasions staff were task orientated, and they were not always aware of their positioning in relation to supporting interactions, experiences and outcomes. This was particularly noticeable during busier times of the day and throughout daily transitions. As a result, staff did not always pick up on cues from children for support or interaction. This impacted on the quality of play experiences children received.

**This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.**

## 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).

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