

# Smiley Stars Nursery - Crosshill Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
24 July 2025

**Service provided by:**  
Crosshill Care Ltd

**Service provider number:**  
SP2022000263

**Service no:**  
CS2022000398

## About the service

Smiley Stars Nursery - Crosshill is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 41 children aged from birth to those not yet attending primary school. The service operates from a large domestic property in the Crosshill area of south Glasgow.

The service is conveniently located to bus and transport links and is close to other nurseries and schools.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 22 and 23 July 2025. Feedback was given to the provider, manager and local authority representative on 24 July 2025. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate. During our inspection there were 22 children present on the Tuesday and 18 on the Wednesday. 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:

- received electronic feedback from ten families who used the service
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

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 were happy and cared for by staff who knew them well.
- The provider is committed to the continuous refurbishment of the environment and resources.
- Staff were kind, caring and genuinely loved the children in their care.
- The manager was motivated to lead the team in improvements.

## 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?	4 - 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?

4 - Good

We evaluated different parts of this key question as very good and good, with an overall grade of good. Several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed the areas for improvement.

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

During our observations, it was clear that the children were thriving in an environment where they received consistent nurturing care and support. They appeared happy, confident, and eager to engage with both their peers and the activities around them. Parents who provided feedback agreed that staff were kind and nurturing, some of their comments included:

"The staff are fantastic. They are kind, caring and considerate. My little boy is quite sensitive and the compassion and the encouragement they show him is second to none" and "The nursery nurses are all so friendly and welcoming. When I hand over my daughter I feel I'm giving her to a friend or a relative. I feel they really care about her and love her like she is their own. I didn't think I would ever say something like that but my daughter really loves all of them and talks about them frequently."

The children showed strong emotional awareness, were able to express their feelings, and demonstrated kindness and cooperation in group settings. Their curiosity and willingness to explore new ideas suggested they felt safe and supported. This nurturing atmosphere helped them build important life skills for example problem-solving, communication, and resilience.

Staff were aware of children's medical requirements. They showed a strong understanding of each child's individual health needs, ensuring that care was both attentive and personalised. Health information was clearly recorded and regularly updated in partnership with parents. Medication was stored securely and administered with care, following strict procedures to ensure safety and accuracy. Staff maintained detailed records of all medication given and communicated effectively with one another to ensure consistency across the team. This careful management helped create a safe, nurturing environment where children's health and well-being were prioritised at all times.

Staff responded promptly and sensitively to children who needed to sleep, recognising individual cues and routines. Children were settled calmly and supported to rest in a quiet, comfortable environment that promoted relaxation. Safe sleep practices were consistently followed, including appropriate supervision, safe sleeping positions, and the use of designated sleep areas. As a result, children were able to rest peacefully and safely, supporting their overall well-being and development.

Each child had an electronic personal plan. These plans had been thoughtfully developed to reflect their individual needs, interests, and routines. Staff worked with parents to gather detailed information, ensuring that each plan was tailored to support the child's well-being and development. The plans included specific strategies for care, learning, and health, and were regularly reviewed to remain responsive to any changes. This personalised approach enabled staff to provide consistent, nurturing support that respected each child's unique circumstances and promoted positive outcomes.

The service provided a variety of healthy snacks and lunches to children. They had recently deployed an outside caterer to provide lunches for children. Staff and children reported positively about the quality and

variety of lunches provided. We observed snack and lunchtime in both playrooms. These were calm and enjoyable experiences where children were well supported and encouraged to develop independence. We found in the baby room that lunch time was a calm and relaxed experience, however noted that for children aged 2-5 years it was noisier and a little cramped. We acknowledged that this was due to the temporary arrangements of the rooms being joined together to enable refurbishment work to be carried out.

Most staff demonstrated an understanding of child protection policies and procedures. They participated in regular child protection and refresher training. This supported the safety and well-being of all children in their care. They were confident in recognising signs of concern and knew the appropriate steps to take, including how to report and record any issues in line with safeguarding protocols. This approach helped to safeguard and protect children.

### 1.3 Play and Learning

We observed children having fun and engaging enthusiastically in a variety of play activities, showing creativity, cooperation, and enjoyment. They explored their environment with curiosity and interacted positively with peers and staff. However, at times, their play was interrupted due to routine transitions which occasionally disrupted their focus and flow. Despite these interruptions, staff responded with sensitivity, helping children to re-engage and maintain a positive experience. Staff should review the pace and balance of day to minimise interrupting children's play and learning. Overall, the play environment supported children's development and well-being, with opportunities for both structured and spontaneous learning.

Children's play and learning was recorded and shared with parents on an online App. Most parents who provided feedback told us that they were satisfied with how staff shared information about their child's learning and development. Some of their comments included:

"Staff give really detailed goals and plans. It's so nice reading them and we get very detailed updates about development." Some parents felt communication and updates about their child's learning and development could be improved.

Observations highlighted the types of experiences and activities that children had engaged in at nursery. Observations sometimes lacked specific detail and did not consistently link to clear developmental outcomes. While general progress was noted, the observations would benefit from a sharper focus on what the child was learning or achieving in the moment. To strengthen practice, staff should aim to make observations more purposeful by identifying the learning taking place and using this to inform meaningful next steps that support each child's continued development.

Outdoor play was offered daily, providing children with valuable opportunities for physical activity and exploration. However, access to the outdoor area was highly structured, and children were not able to choose when they wanted to go outside. This limited their ability to follow their own interests and rhythms throughout the day. To better support child-led learning, the setting could consider introducing more flexible access to outdoor play, supporting children to move freely between indoor and outdoor environments. This approach would promote support individual preferences, and enhance engagement through self-directed play.

Staff supported children to participate in physical risky play. These experiences allowed children to challenge themselves physically, build confidence, and develop coordination and gross motor skills in a safe and supervised environment. During the inspection, children in the 3-5 room were observed participating in a Play on Pedals session. It was clear how much they enjoyed the activity, confidently using balance bikes with

control and awareness. This experience not only promoted physical development but also supported independence, spatial awareness, and road safety skills in a fun and engaging way.

Staff planned play and learning experiences by drawing on playroom observations, previous learning, and meaningful discussions with children. This approach helped ensure that activities were relevant, engaging, and responsive to children's interests and developmental needs. Floor books were in place in each room and are currently in the early stages of use. To maximise their impact, continued work is needed to develop these as tools for recording learning, reflecting on progress, and capturing children's voices. Strengthening the use of floor books will support child-led planning and provide a valuable resource for sharing learning journeys with families and colleagues.

## How good is our setting?

**4 - Good**

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

### **Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.**

Children benefitted from an environment that was safe and secure. Staff were vigilant in ensuring they knew the whereabouts of all children at all times, demonstrating a strong commitment to safety and supervision. An electronic register system was in place and effectively maintained to record the presence of children, staff, and visitors within the setting. When children moved to the garden, their transition was promptly recorded on the system, ensuring accurate and up-to-date tracking. This approach supported a safe and well-organised environment, allowing staff to respond quickly and confidently in the event of an emergency or evacuation.

As a result of a recent environmental audit and ongoing monitoring of children's environments and experiences, meaningful improvements had been made to both the resources available and the overall quality of children's play. Staff demonstrated an increased understanding of the value of loose parts and natural materials, which led to more open-ended, imaginative play. Children were observed to be more curious, engaged, and excited in their learning as a result. Additionally, the introduction of soft furnishings and ambient lighting created a calmer, more nurturing atmosphere, supporting children's emotional well-being and helping to foster a sense of comfort and security within the setting.

During the inspection, children from the Dragonflies room upstairs were temporarily being cared for in the Butterfly room downstairs. While the number of children present was relatively low, it was noted that the space felt somewhat cramped at times, particularly during lunchtime. Staff managed the situation with care and attention, ensuring children remained comfortable and supported. It was acknowledged that this arrangement was a temporary measure due to ongoing refurbishment, and the provider was actively working to restore the usual room setup. This flexibility demonstrated a commitment to maintaining continuity of care during environmental improvements.

The provider has demonstrated a clear and ongoing commitment to enhancing the nursery environment and resources. During the visit, refurbishment work was actively underway, particularly focused on upgrading the upstairs toilets and changing facilities. This development was in direct response to the increasing number of three-year-old children requiring nappy changing. By reconfiguring the space to include a dedicated changing area, the provider is taking thoughtful, responsive action to meet children's evolving needs. These improvements will contribute to better hygiene, dignity, and comfort for children, ultimately supporting positive outcomes in their care and well-being.

An extensive refurbishment of the garden is planned to take place within the next three weeks, demonstrating the provider's continued commitment to improving the outdoor environment for children. Planned upgrades include the installation of outdoor toilets, monoblock resurfacing, and the addition of grassed areas, all of which will enhance the quality and functionality of the space. During the visit, we discussed the security of the gate leading to the garden. The provider gave assurance that a secure entry gate is included in the refurbishment plans. This improvement will further support children's safety while enabling greater access to high-quality outdoor play experiences.

Robust risk assessments had been carried out in relation to the ongoing refurbishment, demonstrating a proactive approach to maintaining safety. These assessments were clearly documented and shared with both staff and parents, ensuring transparency and a shared understanding of the measures in place. We found the risk assessments to be relevant and effective in supporting the safety of children, staff, and families. In addition to this, daily checks and risk assessments were consistently carried out across all areas of the environment and service delivery. Notably, staff had begun to involve children in assessing the safety of their surroundings. For example, we observed staff supporting children during a walk around the garden, encouraging them to identify potential hazards and discuss how to stay safe. This approach not only promotes a culture of safety but also empowers children to take an active role in their own well-being.

Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of infection prevention and control procedures, which were embedded in daily practice. They consistently supported children in effective handwashing routines at key times, such as after personal care and before and after meals, helping to promote good hygiene habits. Tables and highchairs were thoroughly cleaned before and after mealtimes, ensuring a clean and safe environment for eating. During the visit, it was noted that the placement of the air freshener and cleaning materials in the Butterfly room's changing area should be reviewed to ensure they are stored safely and out of children's reach.

## How good is our leadership?

## 4 - Good

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

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

The manager and the team, with the support of senior managers, had worked hard to address identified areas for improvement. Their collective efforts were evident in the positive changes observed across the setting, including enhancements to the environment, planning, and daily practice. This demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement and a shared vision for delivering high-quality care and learning experiences for children. The collaborative approach fostered a culture of reflection, accountability, and progress, which is central to achieving positive outcomes for children and families.

Engagement with the Care Inspectorate Improvement Programme has had a positive impact on the quality of leadership and practice within the setting. As a result, the manager has developed a clear and focused understanding of monitoring, auditing, and self-evaluation processes. This knowledge has been effectively shared with the wider staff team, who also demonstrated a growing confidence in these areas. One staff member commented, "Management include staff in the self-evaluation of the nursery and we do this by completing the quality indicators to discuss what we are doing well, how we know we are doing this, and if there is anything that we can work on as a team to improve the quality and service within the nursery." This

collaborative approach is helping to build a reflective culture focused on continuous improvement and positive outcomes for children.

As a result of planned staff training aimed at addressing areas for improvement, staff engagement and the quality of interactions with children had noticeably improved. The management and staff team showed a strong willingness to embrace change and were actively implementing small tests of change to evaluate the impact of new approaches. One positive outcome of this was the decision to delay staff lunches until all children had finished eating, ensuring that lunchtime remained a safe, calm, and engaging experience for children. Staff also reflected positively on the training, with one team member sharing, "I believe the training has had a positive impact on the experiences I set out for the children and regained this knowledge on using more open-ended resources for experiences." This commitment to professional development is helping to enhance the quality of care and learning across the setting.

The service had a clear and relevant improvement plan in place, which aligned well with the priorities identified during the inspection. We could see that the manager actively engaged staff in reviewing the progress of planned improvements, fostering a shared sense of responsibility and ownership. By ensuring staff were well-informed and involved in the process, the manager helped create a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement. This inclusive approach supported staff in feeling valued and empowered, and contributed positively to the overall quality of the service.

The manager had begun to engage staff in self-evaluation activities using How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare? (HGIOELC), supporting reflective practice and continuous improvement. Staff who participated in these tasks demonstrated honesty and thoughtfulness in their assessments, and where areas for development were identified, appropriate changes were implemented. We suggested that the manager now begin to introduce and evaluate the service using the new Quality Framework. This will further strengthen the self-evaluation process and ensure alignment with current national guidance. Continued involvement of staff in this process will help maintain a shared commitment to improvement and high-quality outcomes for children.

We found that some of the current monitoring tasks had become overly data-focused, with an emphasis on the quantity of observations rather than their quality or purpose. For example, senior managers were noted to comment on the number of observations recorded, rather than how effectively these observations reflected children's progress, interests, or developmental needs. To strengthen practice, monitoring should be more outcome-focused, with a clear emphasis on the impact of learning experiences for children. Keeping children at the heart of monitoring will ensure that the process remains meaningful, reflective, and supportive of positive outcomes for children.

The service showed a commitment to involving parents in shaping the nursery experience through effective consultation. Parents who provided feedback were positive about how the service involves them in the development of the service. Some of their comments included; "The nursery consistently asks for feedback and acts upon it. They also organise parent/carer open afternoons and the manager has recently implemented an anonymous suggestion box, but we've always found her really open to feedback in person too."

This collaborative approach led to meaningful improvements that reflected the views and needs of families. For example, when parents were asked how communication could be enhanced, one suggestion was the introduction of a newsletter. In response, the service implemented a termly newsletter, strengthening home-nursery links. Another successful consultation involved the transition to an external catering provider. Parents were consulted before the change and their feedback was reviewed afterward, with responses



indicating a positive reception. These examples highlight how parent engagement has directly influenced service development and contributed to improved outcomes for children and families.

We noted that although the service consulted effectively with parents, they did not allow parents access to playrooms. This meant that parents missed out on the opportunity to observe how their child interacted, learned and developed in their nursery environment. It also had the potential to impact on the development of strong partnerships between parents and staff. We asked the service to review this and signposted them to the care inspectorate document "Me, My family and My childcare setting" for guidance.

## How good is our staff team?

**5 - Very Good**

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

### Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

We observed sufficient available staff to meet the needs of all children present. Staff were appropriately deployed across the environment and were responsive to children's individual needs. This meant that children received high quality care and supervision.

Staff knew children in their care. Interactions were warm, consistent, and tailored to each child's personality and developmental stage. It was evident that staff had built trusting relationships with the children, which supported their emotional well-being and engagement in activities.

An effective keyworker system was in place. Keyworkers were observed providing consistent care and support, contributing to a sense of security and continuity for the children. This system also appeared to support effective communication with families and a deeper understanding of each child's needs and progress.

A discussion was held with the management team regarding the current arrangement for a member of staff being designated as "on nappies." While this system may have been intended to streamline routines, it was noted that it contradicted the nurturing ethos and child-centred approach promoted by the service. The practice of assigning one staff member to manage all nappy changes had the potential to reduce opportunities for individualised care and meaningful interactions during personal care routines. These moments are important for building trust, supporting emotional development, and reinforcing secure attachments. The management team was receptive to feedback, and it was suggested that they review this arrangement to ensure that personal care is approached in a more nurturing and responsive manner.

Staff communicated very well with each other throughout the visit. Clear and effective communication was observed, particularly when staff needed to leave the room to complete a task. In these instances, staff promptly informed colleagues, ensuring that appropriate supervision and support for the children remained in place at all times. This helped to ensure children were well supervised and kept safe.

Since the last inspection, two new members of staff had been recruited into the service. As part of the visit, a sample of their recruitment files was reviewed. It was evident that safe and effective recruitment procedures had been followed. Both staff members had two references on file, which provided assurance of their suitability for the role. In addition, PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) checks had been completed prior to their start dates, ensuring that appropriate safeguarding measures were in place. These practices highlighted a commitment by the service to safe recruitment and child protection.

The service had introduced a more robust and structured induction procedure for new staff. The management team confirmed that they were using the national induction resource to guide and support staff in understanding their roles and responsibilities.

Monthly induction meetings were held over a six-month period, providing regular opportunities for reflection, guidance, and progress monitoring. This approach enabled the manager to track staff development effectively and ensure that new team members were well-supported as they settled into their roles. The structured induction process contributed to a clearer understanding of expectations among staff and promoted consistency in practice across the team.

Staff had taken on leadership roles across key areas of the curriculum, including numeracy, literacy, outdoor play, eco initiatives, community links, and parental engagement. These roles have been clearly defined and embedded into practice.

Through discussions with staff, it was evident that these responsibilities had a positive impact on motivation and professional development. Staff spoke confidently and enthusiastically about their champion roles, demonstrating ownership and a clear understanding of their contributions to the setting's improvement journey.

Information and ideas related to these leadership areas were regularly shared during staff meetings, promoting a collaborative culture where all team members were involved in learning and driving forward improvements. This approach has helped to enhance outcomes for children by ensuring that curriculum areas are thoughtfully led and continuously developed.

## 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

The provider should support staff to further build on their understanding of child development, theory and practice. This will help to ensure that children are supported to achieve the best possible outcomes. Further learning and development on quality observations, assessing progress and using this knowledge to inform their planning, will further enhance this area.

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 19 August 2024.**

#### Action taken since then

Staff and management had engaged in training to support their understanding and knowledge of child development, theory and practice. As a result of this staff confidence had improved. Interactions and

engagement with children were meaningful and nurturing. Children's play and learning was planned and observed to support positive outcomes for children. We have therefore concluded that this area for improvement had been met.

### Previous area for improvement 2

To support the service to identify their strengths and areas for further improvements, the provider should further develop their quality assurance processes. This should include but is not limited to:

- (a) developing robust processes for auditing and monitoring children's individual needs, progress and development
- (b) further development of the self-evaluation framework to support the service identify strengths and areas for improvement
- (c) undertake monitoring of service procedures and staff practice.

This is to ensure management and leadership is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: "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 19 August 2024.**

### Action taken since then

Scheduled effective monitoring of staff practice, the environment and children's care and development had been developed in the service. As a result of this outcomes for children had improved. We have therefore concluded that this area for improvement had been met.

## 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?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very 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?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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