

Busy Bees Nursery (Stranraer) Day Care of Children

Cluarran
London Road
Stranraer
DG9 8BF

Telephone: 01776707021

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 July 2025

Service provided by:
Susan Boland

Service provider number:
SP2004004149

Service no:
CS2003039291

About the service

Busy Bees Nursery (Stranraer) is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 66 children up to 12 years of age as follows:

- 12 children from birth to under two years old
- 24 children 2 years old and not yet three years old
- 30 children 3 years old up to 12 years old.

The care service will provide full day care, nursery provision and out of school care from Cluarran, London Road, Stranraer, DG9 9BF.

The service is conveniently situated close to local schools and areas of natural interest. It has a secure garden area, where children can take part in a variety of outdoor activities.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced visit which took place on Tuesday 8 July and Wednesday 9 July 2025. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors from an Early Learning and Childcare team of 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 and members of their families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents including children's personal plans, risk assessments and medication records.

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 cared for by a warm and kind staff team who built respectful relationships which supported children's confidence and wellbeing.
- Children enjoyed a fun and engaging environment where their right to play was respected. They had access to a wide range of experiences that supported skill development, creativity, and independence.
- Safety and security were well managed through daily checks, secure access, and regular headcounts, with children encouraged to think about safety.
- Children were cared for in a calm, well-furnished, and welcoming environment that supported independence and choice. They could move freely between indoor and outdoor spaces and access a variety of resources.
- Management and staff demonstrated a strong commitment to improvement and engaged positively throughout the inspection.
- Self-evaluation was in place and guided by national frameworks, though more collaborative and outcome-focused approaches would enhance its impact.
- Staff worked as a team and communicated well with one another, creating a supportive environment that ensured consistent care for children
- Parents spoke highly of the staff, describing them as warm, caring, and knowledgeable.

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?	4 - 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

1.1 Nurturing Care and Support

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

Children were cared for by a friendly and kind staff team. Staff knew the children well and used their knowledge to support their learning and development. Interactions between staff and children were warm and respectful, with staff encouraging children to share and be considerate of others. Staff consistently praised children and celebrated their achievements, including wider achievements from home. Strong attachments had been formed between children and key staff. These secure relationships meant that children appeared happy, confident and welcomed in the setting.

Transitions were managed with care. Improvements had been made to support younger children moving between rooms and all children had a keyworker to support their settling in and it would be helpful if this were extended across the nursery for older children. Parents were welcomed into the setting and had opportunities to stay and play. Staff supported children during arrivals and departures with clear communication and reassurance.

All children had personal care plans based on the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators and contained essential information for children's care. These were reviewed with families, although some lacked dates, making it difficult to track updates. Information was recorded across different formats, and inconsistencies in detail meant some plans did not fully reflect the child. Strengthening monitoring and consistency would support improved outcomes and we have discussed different ways of improving this with the management team.

Staff were respectful during personal care routines, and nappy changing was carried out with dignity. Children were encouraged to wipe their faces after eating, and we saw that mirrors were provided to help them. Mealtimes included healthy options, and staff followed current guidance. Children were encouraged to be independent, though this varied across rooms. In some areas, staff were task-focused, and opportunities for social interaction were missed. Improving consistency and organisation would enhance this mealtime experience. Sleep routines were responsive to children's needs and monitored appropriately. However, written permission for sleeping in buggies was not always in place.

Parents valued the care provided and felt involved. They told us "I was given the paperwork home to look over first and then could go over it with the keyworker after. This gave me time to think about the questions and I could also involve my partner with it too, which was nice"

1.3 Play and Learning

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

Children had fun and their right to play was respected. We heard laughter and happy chat both indoors and outside. Children chose where they wanted to play and were offered a range of experiences which supported the development of skills like balancing, measuring and fine motor control. They played independently and with friends. Staff supported their play by listening, engaging with them and providing the materials they needed.

Staff were responsive to children's interests and stages of development. They used their knowledge of child development to plan next steps and support learning. Staff observed children, however the quality of recorded observations varied. Younger children would benefit from more evaluative observations which clearly identify progress and next steps. Further training on this would support staff confidence and consistency. It would be helpful to review activities for school aged children to ensure that they are appropriate and relevant for them. Elements of tracking were in place and now need to be embedded more fully. Improving monitoring by room leaders would support planning and help the manager track progress more effectively.

Children experienced a language-rich environment with songs, stories and conversations. Staff supported communication and language development, particularly for younger children. However, questioning often focused on gathering information rather than extending thinking. Staff should continue to develop their use of open-ended questioning and provocations, especially for the under threes.

Children could choose from a variety of resources which supported their creativity and curiosity. They explored arts and crafts, loose parts and role play. Opportunities for mark making were available, although some were missed. Embedding numeracy and literacy across all areas would help staff to make sure that these skills are part of everyday learning. Loose parts play and schematic play were developing and should continue to be a focus.

The setting made good use of the local community to enrich learning, including visits, outings and engagement with families and local events.

How good is our setting?

4 - Good

2.2 Children experience high quality facilities

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

Children were cared for in a well-furnished, calm and comfortable environment. Most furniture was appropriately sized for children, with some consideration needing to be given for the needs of adults and older children. The environment was welcoming and supported children's independence and choice. Children moved freely between areas and chose whether to play indoors or outside. They had access to a variety of spaces and resources which supported them to choose to be active, independent or play with others.

The environment was safe and secure. Staff carried out daily checks, and access to the building was well managed. Visitors signed in, gates were locked, and exit buttons were out of children's reach. Regular headcounts meant that staff knew where children were at all times. Children were encouraged to think about safety and were familiar with the Care Inspectorate's SIMOA elephant. Risk assessments were in place for each room, though these varied in quality and were often reactive. A more consistent and proactive approach would strengthen safety across the whole setting. Blind cords were not always secure, and this was addressed during the inspection.

Infection prevention and control practices were generally good. Children washed their hands before meals, and after going to the toilet. Staff followed good hygiene practices, and we discussed the use of gloves when handling food during our visit.

Information was stored securely, and staff had received relevant training. Policies on confidentiality and social media were in place and followed.

Parents spoke positively about the range of experiences offered and told us "The children get outside a lot of the day and on days when it's quiet they are taken on trips to see different things, like parks and the horses.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well

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

Management and staff engaged positively throughout the inspection and demonstrated a clear commitment to improving the service. The setting had a shared vision, values and aims which had recently been reviewed with staff and families. This helped to create a consistent and supportive environment for children.

Children and families had some opportunities to be involved in the service through surveys, daily conversations and stay and play sessions. The setting may wish to further strengthen this by introducing a parent forum to support improvement planning.

Self-evaluation was in place and staff used national guidance to reflect on practice. For example, they had used the Care Inspectorate's mealtimes practice document to review the lunchtime experience for children. While staff did have opportunities to reflect on practice in the setting, these tended to be done individually and informally. We have suggested that developing more collaborative and evaluative approaches would support meaningful next steps better.

An improvement plan was in place and included a focus on enhancing the outdoor environment. Staff had worked hard to implement changes, and children benefited from improved outdoor learning opportunities. There was recognition that self-evaluation was an area for improvement and a whole team meeting had been held to support this. Additional tools to support the process had been introduced including the use of online forms and paper reflection sheets.

Monitoring and auditing processes were in place, including a calendar for tracking staff practice. However some areas such as the after school provision had not been reviewed recently. Monitoring tended to focus on process rather than outcomes. Developing more outcome-focused observations and following up on identified improvements would strengthen practice.

Staff appraisals had been reintroduced, giving staff the opportunity to reflect on their practice. While some staff were confident in identifying their own learning needs, this was not yet consistent. A training chart was in place, and collating appraisal outcomes would support planning for future learning.

Some staff were not registered with the Scottish Social Services Council and this was addressed during the inspection. We agreed that the setting's induction process should be reviewed to ensure that new staff begin registration promptly and that returning staff re-register within required timescales. The setting was using the national induction resource and had appointed mentors for new staff.

How good is our staff team?**4 - Good****4.3 Staff deployment**

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

Staff worked well together and demonstrated a strong sense of teamwork. They communicated with each other and with management, creating a supportive environment. This helped ensure that children received consistent care throughout the day.

The service was appropriately staffed to meet the needs of children. Staff breaks were planned and managed to minimise disruption to routines and ensure that children were supported at all times.

Staff were observant and responsive, moving around the setting to meet children's needs. For example, during lunchtime, staff adjusted their positions to support children as needed, which helped create a calm and nurturing experience. Staff were compassionate and motivated to support children's development. They engaged positively with the inspection process and were keen to share their experiences.

New staff received a structured induction and were supported by experienced staff. Staff felt confident in approaching management and would welcome more planned opportunities to discuss their wellbeing. While staff had opportunities to meet within their rooms, these meetings were informal and not always recorded. Better recording of staff discussions would be helpful for tracking next steps and responsibilities. Staff expressed a desire for more regular whole-team meetings to strengthen communication across the setting.

Staff were generally confident in their child protection responsibilities, though some expressed uncertainty in specific scenarios. More regular opportunities to discuss safeguarding through case studies or reflective discussions would support continued development in this area.

Parents spoke positively about the staff team, describing them as approachable, knowledgeable and caring. One parent shared "Everyone is so warm and welcoming. I can tell just how much they care about my child, and all of the children in their care."

Complaints

Please see Care Inspectorate website (www.careinspectorate.com) for details of complaints about the service which have been upheld.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	4 - 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?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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