

Step By Step Out Of School Club Day Care of Children

Killermont Church Halls
Rannoch Drive
Bearsden
Glasgow
G61 2LD

Telephone: 01419 427 201

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
19 November 2025

Service provided by:
Step By Step Private Nursery Limited

Service provider number:
SP2003001250

Service no:
CS2003003690

About the service

Step by Step Out of School Club is provided by Step by Step Private Nursery Limited. The service operates from the Killermont Church Halls in the Bearsden area of East Dunbartonshire. The service is registered to care for a maximum of 85 children, aged 4 to 14 years. During school term times only to provide a day care of children to a maximum of 120 school aged children from 4 to 14 years. At the time of inspection, 91 children were in attendance.

The service is located within Killermont Church halls and includes a spacious open-plan room and three supplementary rooms, currently used as a snack area and two breakout spaces. It also benefits from access to a garden and a designated forest school area in close proximity.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 17 and 18 November 2025. 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 children using the service
- gathered feedback from six families through online questionnaires
- spoke with staff
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment.

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.

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.

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

Key messages

- The provider, manager, and staff team worked collaboratively with a clear vision for continuous improvement. Leadership was promoted at all levels, empowering staff and fostering a culture of respect, inclusion, and accountability.
- Staff were consistently kind and respectful, offering comfort and reassurance. Their caring interactions demonstrated attentiveness and responsiveness to individual needs, reflecting a strong understanding of the nurture principles that underpin emotional security and positive relationships.
- The service maintained strong, trusting relationships with families, ensuring their voices shaped experiences and personal planning. Families reported high levels of confidence in staff and valued open communication.
- Staff demonstrated a strong understanding of child development and national guidance, embedding play-based learning at the heart of practice. Children's right to play was consistently respected, with rich, varied, and continuous learning opportunities that promoted engagement and enjoyment.

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

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| Leadership | 6 - Excellent |
| Children play and learn | 6 - Excellent |
| Children are supported to achieve | 5 - Very Good |

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

Leadership 6 - Excellent

Leadership and management of staff and resources

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

During the inspection, it was clear that the provider, manager, and staff team shared a strong vision focused on continuous improvement and positive outcomes for all children. The service's vision, values, and aims were fully embedded in daily practice, and working relationships within the team were exceptionally strong. Staff demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment, actively promoting high-quality experiences and a culture of respect, inclusion, and continuous improvement.

Children were consistently offered comfort, reassurance, and prompt support. The team had established a rights-based ethos that was well understood and embraced by everyone, including the children. Children's voices were heard and acted upon; a recent example was their confident protest about the removal of some items from the snack menu. This demonstrated that children felt empowered, respected, and assured their views would influence decisions. At the time of inspection, children and staff were collaboratively reviewing the forest school vision, values, and aims. This showed that children were actively involved in shaping and reviewing the service, further reinforcing the team's commitment to a rights-based approach.

The design and implementation of roles and responsibilities within the leadership team were exceptional. Leadership was promoted at all levels, fostering a culture where staff felt included, empowered, and valued. Individual skill sets were recognised and utilised effectively, underpinned by current local and national theory and practice. This reinforced accountability and ensured robust systems across the service.

Staff told us they had opportunities to lead change, which resulted in positive outcomes for children and families. They spoke passionately about recent developments, including forest schools, planning high-quality experiences, and stay-and-play sessions. These initiatives reflected an approach that emphasised the importance of play and respected each child's individuality. This demonstrated a collaborative commitment to improvement, which left the team feeling empowered and valued.

The service demonstrated exceptional capacity for change, responding swiftly and effectively to inspector feedback. The provider and manager adopted a proactive, sector-leading approach by implementing systems to triangulate evidence within children's personal plans, ensuring accuracy and consistency in meeting individual needs. This highly reflective and collaborative approach, supported by robust self-evaluation and quality assurance systems, places the service in a sector-leading position with a clear commitment to ongoing improvement that delivers outstanding outcomes for children and families.

Staff told us they had felt well supported by the management team and each other. They were regularly involved in self-evaluation through meetings and collaborative working. Staff reflected on practice using test of change formats and often engaged in discussions exploring the benefits of change and its impact on learning and teaching. As part of these processes, they took part in peer support discussions and made effective use of good practice guidance, such as Realising the Ambition. This approach helped staff stay informed and understand their role in driving improvements and achieving positive outcomes for children, while also promoting accountability and a culture of continuous improvement.

Improvement planning and self-evaluation approaches were highly effective, using clear, rigorous, evidence-based processes to identify strengths, address areas for development, and promote excellence across the setting. The service improvement plan linked directly to staff professional development, ensuring that priorities supported both practice and learning. Current key priorities included expanding the forest school, strengthening leadership through champion roles, and revisiting Setting the Table with a particular focus on incorporating children's views on nutritious snacks. These improvements followed a measured, planned approach informed by best practice guidance and research, and the team continually evaluated progress to ensure sustained impact.

Staff were safely recruited in line with safer staffing guidance and were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The service supported staff through a comprehensive in-house induction aligned with the National Induction Programme. Staff were welcomed and mentored throughout their induction journey and ongoing professional learning. Clear processes were in place for mentoring and supporting staff, with time allocated for PRDs and an open-door policy that promoted regular communication and support.

Children play and learn 6 - Excellent

Playing, learning and developing

We evaluated this key question as excellent where performance was sector leading with outstandingly high outcomes for children.

The provider, manager, and staff team showed a strong and consistent understanding of child development. Staff spoke about the national guidance Realising the Ambition, which had a clear and positive impact on their practice and ability to skilfully support children. Practice was underpinned by an exceptional commitment to play-based learning, ensuring children's right to play was respected and individual needs were met. Observations clearly demonstrated high levels of engagement, with the service providing sector-leading opportunities for growth, learning, and enjoyment.

There was a breadth of activities on offer, led by children. Examples included planting and growing in the garden, science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) activities, a book corner, kitchen area, board games, active sports, outdoor play, forest school, crafts and malleable, loose parts, and dress-up/imaginative play. All of these opportunities formed part of continuous provision rather than one-off experiences, ensuring children had consistent access to rich and varied learning opportunities.

Children were consistently empowered to take ownership of their learning experiences. They demonstrated confidence in leading activities and influencing decisions, including planning and implementing alongside staff. Observations and documentation, such as floorbooks and online journals, clearly reflected this collaborative approach. Learning areas were thoughtfully designed, offering rich and varied experiences. Staff demonstrated strong skills in extending and challenging learning, particularly during planned experiences. The environment promoted exploration, with children confidently requesting changes and contributing ideas for new resources. On occasion, children assisted in placing orders using catalogues, further reinforcing their sense of agency and leadership.

High-quality experiences were well documented and shared with families through floorbooks and online journals. This showed us that national guidance such as Realising the Ambition, Curriculum for Excellence, and Rights of the Child was not only understood by staff but actively reflected in practice, resulting in rich, purposeful learning opportunities for children. We saw evidence that also told us families share play and achievements from home, meaning children's learning was celebrated beyond the service and partnerships with families were strengthened.

Staff supported children to recognise and regulate their emotions and feelings during play. The sound of children's laughter featured throughout the session, demonstrating that they were confident, happy, safe, and having fun. There was a strong emphasis on supporting children's safety and wellbeing, for example, children were actively involved in risk-benefit activities during forest school sessions. These experiences showed that staff were planning in accordance with children's developmental stages, ensuring learning was meaningful and age-appropriate.

Children's emotional well-being was at the heart of the service. Children used a well-utilised kindness box, and floorbooks highlighted mind maps that captured what makes them happy and their play and learning aspirations. This demonstrated that children's voices were central to shaping experiences and promoting inclusion and emotional wellbeing.

Children's voices were central to curriculum design and implementation. Observations and documentation, such as floorbooks and online journals, showed that experiences were meaningful, responsive to children's interests, and enriched through participation and leadership. This approach promoted independence, confidence, and a sense of ownership, aligning with national guidance and best practice frameworks.

Staff used observations to confidently ascertain where a child was developmentally and identified areas where they required support or further challenge. Staff consistently engaged children with a clear understanding of child development, enabling them to plan experiences that were appropriate, responsive, and challenging. Their knowledge ensured that learning opportunities were purposeful and tailored to meet individual needs, fostering curiosity, confidence, and progression.

Children are supported to achieve 5 - Very Good

Nurturing care and support

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

Children were cared for in a warm and nurturing way. Staff worked closely together to make sure children felt safe and supported. Staff were kind, loving and respectful, offering comfort when children were upset. We observed lots of caring interactions, including hugs, hand holding and gentle reassurance, showing that staff were attentive and responsive to children's needs.

Children and their families were respected, included and genuinely cared for by staff. Children were thriving and had secure attachments. Families told us "All the staff are outstanding. Each seems to bring different qualities and it's great they are allowed to express this and share it with the children." And "Keep up the amazing work! It's no wonder our (child) never wants to come home from OSC!" This showed us that families had a high level of trust and confidence in the service.

Transitions were a clear strength of the service. Staff understood the importance of supporting children during these times and adapted settling-in procedures to meet individual needs. Children were invited to attend several sessions alongside their families before starting, creating opportunities to build relationships and familiarity with the environment. This unhurried, child-centred approach promoted emotional security and confidence, helping children feel safe and comfortable from the outset.

During inspection we observed positive communication between out of school care staff and teaching staff, ensuring information was shared promptly. This partnership supported smooth, calm, and secure transitions from school to the after-school service, promoting children's wellbeing.

Children were happy, relaxed, confident, and enjoyed themselves in all areas of the service. Staff had worked hard to improve the environment, creating spaces that encouraged children to play together and build relationships. Some children played on their own and were content, while others interacted with their peers and staff. We saw lovely moments of children playing with staff, for example a large group enjoying a game of football whilst others calmly chatted and explored the sand, which reflected strong, positive relationships and a nurturing environment that promoted children's confidence and wellbeing.

We found that the service followed a two-week snack menu, which met the standards set out in the Setting the Table guidance. Children had access to fresh water and enjoyed snack in a relaxed atmosphere that was unhurried and sociable. The snack space was available and accessed throughout the whole session, providing children with a social space to meet friends and enjoy food at their leisure, meaning snack times were flexible and child-led rather than time-limited.

Staff had a clear understanding of children's health and dietary needs, with safe and robust systems in place for storing and giving medication. We sampled health plans and found they clearly explained what staff should do in an emergency.

Staff and children were aware of the Care Inspectorate's Safe, Inspect, Monitor, Observe and Act (SIMOA) project, which encourages services to act responsibly to safeguard, protect and support children's wellbeing. This supported children's understanding of safety both in service and at home. Consistent monitoring and supervision indoors and outdoors helped ensure children's safety.

Children's wellbeing was supported through personal planning. Staff worked closely with families to capture information about children's individual needs, to set personal targets, and to review these plans to ensure staff had the most up-to-date information. Families told us "The feedback we get about their personal plan and through the app is far more than we were expecting from a school club environment. The staff seem to really know the children and are able to share pertinent details specifically related to them. We have had the opportunity to discuss any problems/ issues freely." And "I have seen my child's personal plan in the parent zone app and know I can comment on this if I want to. I am happy with the information I get and would speak directly to staff if I have any concerns or questions about my child's care." We asked the provider and manager to ensure that this high standard was consistent across the team, with regular opportunities to showcase good practice examples. This would ensure a shared understanding of expectations, promote consistency in delivering high-quality experiences, and support continuous improvement.

Management and staff had strong relationships with families, and many experiences were shaped by children and their parents. Moving forward, we encouraged the service to facilitate daily pick-ups by inviting families back into the setting. This would strengthen family engagement, promote transparency, and provide opportunities for informal communication that supports continuity of care.

Staff were proud of the strong sense of community at Step by Step Out of School Club. Future plans, such as eco and sustainability developments and family engagement initiatives, aimed to build even stronger partnerships with families. The service's commitment to building positive relationships with families had a meaningful impact on both children and their parents.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

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| Children are supported to achieve | 5 - Very Good |
| Nurturing care and support | 5 - Very Good |

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