

Busy Bees@ Inverness Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
13 February 2026

Service provided by:
Busy Bees Nurseries (Scotland)
Limited

Service provider number:
SP2003002870

Service no:
CS2003008562

About the service

Busy Bees @ Inverness is a day care of children service registered to provide care to a maximum of 26 children under the age of two years, 20 children aged two to under three years, and 36 children aged three years and over.

The service is provided from a large, converted house near the centre of Inverness. The setting consists of a variety of playrooms across two levels. Playrooms provide care to specified age groups. There are changing and toilet facilities for children, an office, catering and staff facilities. The service has several enclosed gardens, which provide outdoor play experiences for children.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 11 February 2026 between 08:30 and 17:45 and 12 February 2026 between 08:40 and 17:15. 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
- spoke with seven families
- received questionnaire feedback from 31 families
- spoke with staff and management
- observed practice and children's experiences
- 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.

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

- Children experienced warm, respectful and nurturing interactions from staff.
- Mealtimes were relaxed, unhurried and calm. Children had increasing opportunities for independence.
- Quality assurance processes had been developed including self-evaluation and improvement planning. As a result, children and families experienced improved outcomes.
- Children were well-supported by appropriate levels of staff across the day to meet their needs.
- Significant improvements had been made to the quality of the environment. This meant children experienced well-maintained, clean and welcoming spaces.
- Children had fun and enjoyed playing both indoors and outdoors. They had opportunities to lead their own play and learning and build on their interests.

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	4 - Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - 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 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work, and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Leadership and management of staff and resources

Families were actively included in the design and review of the vision, values and aims of the setting. The leadership team had planned to involve children and staff in this process, to ensure everyone's voice was reflected in creating a shared vision.

Children and families benefited from staff reflecting on practice. Staff had engaged positively in self-evaluation enabling them to make improvements. There was scope to build on this, for example, using the challenge questions within 'A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors: early learning and childcare.' Families had opportunities to share their views and be involved in the ongoing improvements within the setting. Most families told us their feedback was used in a meaningful way to help develop the service. Their comments included, "The nursery recently had a refurbishment, and did ask for input from parents and children on what they could do to improve the space," "The centre frequently asks for feedback, and encourages parents to share their views and experiences. This helps me feel that our opinions are valued, and that we can contribute to the ongoing development of the service" and, "I can tell the feedback from parents is wanted and valued."

Quality assurance processes had been developed including the use of monitoring. This helped the leadership team to identify strengths and areas for development across the setting. They had begun to follow up on actions identified to inform change and support improvement. As a result, children were experiencing improved outcomes. An improvement plan had been developed which outlined clear, realistic priorities. An appropriate pace of change had supported staff to make improvements. For example, children now experienced calm, sociable and relaxed mealtimes, which supported their independence and life skills.

Staff were recruited in line with safer recruitment practices. We suggested some improvements in how information was recorded, to ensure a consistent and accurate approach. Strengthening this would help to provide clearer assurances that children are kept safe. The leadership team agreed to take this forward. Staff were positive about the induction process, and as a result felt well-supported in their roles to meet children's needs.

Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

Children experienced consistently kind and caring interactions from staff. All families agreed, and strongly agreed they had a good relationship with the staff caring for their children. Their comments included, "Lovely staff, very caring and fun," "The staff are always friendly and genuinely take interest in our family" and, "Everyone knows my child. Warm relationships have been formed between staff and child."

Staff were passionate about providing children with high-quality experiences, and were motivated to continue on their improvement journey. They were committed to engaging in continuous professional development, and reflected on how recent training had supported them to strengthen their understanding of how children develop and learn. Staff had opportunities to reflect together at team meetings and individually during supervision. This helped them to identify ongoing training needs which would benefit the whole staff team, and to support their individual development.

The leadership team had identified where staff would benefit from further support to build on their knowledge and skills, to support, challenge and extend children's play and learning.

A stable staff team meant that children experienced continuity of care, which enabled them to build positive relationships. Children were well-supported by appropriate levels of staff across the day to meet their needs. Staff communicated effectively together, to ensure children experienced positive interactions and were well-supervised. However, on occasions during busier periods of the day, some staff were task focused. As a result, some children experienced limited engagement during these times. Staff breaks were well-planned to minimise impact on children's experiences. The leadership team supported in playrooms when needed. This meant children were cared for by adults who were familiar to them.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work, and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Children experience high quality spaces

Improvements had been made to the setting, which meant that children experienced a well-maintained, clean and welcoming environment. Families commented positively on the refurbishment. They told us, "Recent renovations have improved the maintenance of the building," "It's been great to see our child settle in, and be excited about all the new 'areas' / 'zones' created in the room for them to explore" and, "Recent full refurb looks amazing with really nice spaces for the children to play."

Children experienced an environment which was safe and secure. Staff implemented measures such as regular headcounts to support and keep children safe. Further development of the outdoor spaces was planned to enhance the security of the garden. Staff recognised the benefits of outdoor play, and encouraged children to spend time outdoors. As a result, children had fun outside and had a variety of opportunities to explore, be curious, active and creative.

Families spoke positively about the outdoor play experiences. Their comments included, "They place a great emphasis and importance on outdoor play/learning which is fantastic" and, "This is one of our favourite aspects of the nursery, being able to let them have fun in the garden and develop learning outside." Babies had less frequent opportunities to play outside. During the inspection, they spent all of their time indoors. Staff should consider how they offer babies opportunities to have regular, meaningful outdoor play experiences.

Staff had reflected on how children used spaces within the setting, and made positive changes to support and meet children's care, play and learning needs. Spaces were organised to promote children's independence in play. Some resources were well used by children and would benefit from being refreshed, to ensure they were of a consistently high-quality.

Children were mostly well-supported to wash their hands at appropriate times of the day. This helped to keep them safe and healthy. Further consideration should be given to supporting babies to wash their hands with soap and running water, to minimise the risk of infection. The leadership team were responsive to feedback and had begun to consider ways to address this.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work, and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Playing, learning and developing

Children had fun and enjoyed playing both indoors and outdoors. They had opportunities to lead their own play and learning, which meant they were able to build on their interests. Older children contributed to 'floor books,' including sharing comments and drawings about their experiences and learning.

Spaces and resources had been developed which supported children's engagement. As a result, most children were engaged in play throughout the day. Children's early language development was well-supported through stories, songs and rhymes. Opportunities to promote literacy and numeracy across the different play spaces could be further developed, to deepen children's learning.

Staff were building their confidence in implementing a new planning process. They were strengthening their understanding of the balance between responsive and intentional planning, to support children's progress and development. Intentional planning was in the early stages of implementation. As identified by the leadership team, there was scope to further develop this to plan experiences, to support children's development across a wider range of areas.

Play experiences reflected children's individual interests. Staff were responsive and offered opportunities to explore their interests further. Staff were consistently down at children's level when engaging with them. Their interactions were kind, supportive and tailored to children's individual stages of development. There were some missed opportunities to challenge children in their play and learning. Children would benefit from staff developing approaches, such as wondering aloud and open-ended questioning to support and extend their thinking.

Observations of children's learning were shared with families. Overall, families were positive about the information shared with them. Some families told us they would like more feedback on their child's development. Their comments included, "We are kept informed of all the week's learnings with the weekly updates we get through the app, which then gives us the opportunity to follow it up at home" and, "Overall happy, but would love to get more feedback every so often of what kids have been doing during the day, how they were playing." The quality of observations varied, with some identifying children's progress and development of skills, and others which were more descriptive. The leadership team had identified this through their quality assurance processes, and were providing support to improve.

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.

Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, respectful and nurturing interactions from staff. They were offered comfort and reassurance when needed, which helped them to feel safe and secure. Children told us staff were "kind" and "very fun." Staff knew children very well and were responsive to their cues, including their individual routines. This meant children experienced continuity of care between their home and the setting, which supported their overall wellbeing.

Children and families were warmly welcomed into the setting. Families were invited into the playrooms, which helped to create positive relationships with staff. Families were very positive about their children's care. Their comments included, "The staff are so friendly and kind, and always make us feel so welcome." "The staff are very friendly and seem to genuinely care for the children. They take time to know individual quirks and circumstances, and I feel like we are working together to help my child grow" and, "They listen well and feel like they take the time to put me and my child at ease."

Personal plans reflected children's current needs. Families were involved in developing and reviewing personal plans, including initial discussions with staff about children's individual needs and interests. Staff used this information effectively to support children and as a result, children experienced high-quality care.

Transitions were well-planned and tailored to children's individual needs. Staff offered personalised support to children to help them settle in. They recognised the importance of establishing consistent relationships, and considered the attachments children had built with staff to support smooth transitions. Staff reflected on transitions throughout the day to consider ways for these to be positive experiences for children.

Children experienced relaxed, unhurried and calm mealtimes. They had increasing opportunities for independence, including developing skills to use cutlery and self-serving. Staff sat with children which helped to create a sociable experience. Food choices were nutritious and dietary needs were well-managed. This supported children to be healthy. There was scope to offer children more involvement in preparing food, to enable them to further develop life skills.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

With immediate effect the provider must ensure that medication is stored safely and not accessible to children. Children's records must consistently detail relevant health and medical information, to ensure staff can administer medication when it is required, and do so safely.

This is to comply with Regulation 4(1)(a) (Welfare of Users) of The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/10).

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective." (HSCS 1.24).

This requirement was made on 21 November 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

Medication was appropriately stored and relevant medical information was recorded, to support staff to safely meet children's health care needs. This requirement has been met.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 2

By 13 January 2025 children must be cared for in a safe and hygienic environment. The provider must ensure the maintenance of the building and cleaning practices improve, to ensure that children are cared for in a quality environment.

This is to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (Scottish Statutory Instrument 2011/210) Regulation 4(1)(a)(d) – Welfare of users.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: "I experience an environment that is well-looked after with clean, tidy and well-maintained premises, furnishings and equipment." (HSCS 5.24).

This requirement was made on 21 November 2024.

Action taken on previous requirement

Children were cared for in an environment which was safe and hygienic. The recent refurbishment of the setting meant that children experienced spaces, which were well-maintained and clean. This requirement has been met.

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

Mealtime experiences should be further developed, to ensure that children have opportunities to be independent, develop their self-help skills at mealtimes and be included in their mealtime routines. Mealtimes should be calm and provide a sociable experience.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "I can enjoy unhurried snack and mealtimes in as relaxed and atmosphere as possible." (HSCS 1.35). "I take part in daily routines, such as setting up activities and mealtimes, if this is what I want." (HSCS 2.21).

This area for improvement was made on 21 November 2024.

Action taken since then

Children experienced positive mealtimes, where they had opportunities to be independent and develop their self-help skills. Mealtimes were calm, relaxed and unhurried. Staff spent time with children during mealtimes, which enabled them to create a social experience. This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

Staff should ensure that children consistently experience high-quality and stimulating play opportunities. To do this staff should, at a minimum:

- a) review play spaces and resources available
- b) ensure resources are replenished
- c) ensure resources available provide appropriate challenge, and promote children's curiosity.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: "As a child, I have fun as I develop my skills in understanding, thinking, investigation and problem-solving, including through imagination and storytelling." (HSCS 1.30).

This area for improvement was made on 21 November 2024.

Action taken since then

Some progress had been made to improve the quality of the play spaces, including reviewing the spaces used and adding some new resources. Children would benefit from resources being further developed to provide play and learning experiences, which are challenging and promote curiosity. This area for improvement has not been met and remains in place.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support children to develop and learn at an appropriate pace, staff should be further developing planning approaches and observation skills. This should include how they evaluate children's experiences. This would enable them to plan experiences with a better focus on children's specific next steps, to support children's progress in their learning.

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 21 November 2024.

Action taken since then

Planning approaches had improved and supported staff to observe children's development. Staff had begun to evaluate children's progress using a new tool, which was enabling them to identify children's next steps and support their learning. This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To improve the quality of the service and improve outcomes for children, quality assurance processes, including self-evaluation and improvement planning should be developed. Processes should be monitored and evaluated to help staff to assess the progress of developments, and the impact changes have on outcomes for children.

This is to ensure 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 21 November 2024.

Action taken since then

Quality assurance processes had been developed, including monitoring, which had a positive impact on improving outcomes for children. Self-evaluation and reflection had informed changes and improvement planning. A realistic improvement plan had been developed, which enabled staff to work together to improve experiences for children and families. This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

The service manager should ensure that the deployment of staff ensures needs are consistently met, and daily tasks are planned in a way that does not impact on the quality of engagement with children and their experiences.

The manager should:-

- a) ensure staffing is well-planned to keep children safe and their needs are met
- b) ensure staff work together effectively to plan daily tasks and routines
- c) monitor staff practice and deployment.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that: "My needs are met by the right number of people." (HSCS 3.15). "My care and support is consistent and stable because people work well together." (HSCS 3.19).

This area for improvement was made on 21 November 2024.

Action taken since then

Staff deployment was well-planned, and this meant that children's needs were safely and effectively met. Staff focused on supporting children throughout their daily routines in a way which enabled them to create positive experiences. Staff practice was monitored to support ongoing improvement. This area for improvement has 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.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	4 - Good
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	4 - Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
Children experience high quality spaces	4 - Good
Children play and learn	4 - Good
Playing, learning and developing	4 - Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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