Creche & Play Programmes
Day Care of Children

Unit 12
Back O'Hill Industrial Estate
Back O'Hill Road
Stirling
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Telephone: 01786 233 994

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
30 June 2026

Service provided by:
Stirling Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002689

Service no:
CS2003005403

About the service

Creche & Play Programmes, provided by Stirling Council, operates across a range of community venues throughout the region to support children and families. During the inspection, the crèche was delivered at Mayfield Community Centre. The mobile crèche runs alongside groups and classes for families, offering childcare that enables parents and carers to access support and learning opportunities.

This flexible model allows the service to adapt to the needs and ages of the children who attend. Equipment and resources are set up daily to reflect the individual interests of the children attending.

Creche & Play Programmes are registered to provide a care service to children aged from birth to 14 years.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 23 June 2026 between 10:00 and 17:00 and 24 June 2026 between 09:00 and 13:00. Feedback was shared with the service on 30 June 2026. 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 and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spent time with children using the service
- received feedback from five families of children who attend the service
- spoke with staff and the management team
- spoke with two families in person
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.
- spoke with three visiting professionals.

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.

Key messages

- Children and families experienced a welcoming, inclusive service where they felt valued, respected and supported.
- Strong leadership and effective self-evaluation processes drove continuous improvement and positive outcomes.
- The service listened to families and adapted provision to meet diverse and emerging needs across the community.
- Children benefited from high-quality, engaging play experiences that promoted confidence, creativity and learning.
- Warm, nurturing relationships helped children feel safe, secure and supported in their development and wellbeing.
- Strong partnerships with families and other agencies improved access to support, learning opportunities and community connections.

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	5 - Very Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very 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 5 - Very Good

Leadership and management of staff and resources

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.

The crèche demonstrated a clear commitment to its aim of creating an inclusive and welcoming environment where children were valued as individuals. This was reflected in thoughtfully planned spaces, positive relationships and meaningful learning experiences. The values of love, safety, joy, playfulness, respect and nurture were embedded throughout the setting, with families contributing to the service ethos through personal plans, helping to ensure these remained meaningful and community focused.

The improvement plan was detailed and focused on improving outcomes for children and families. Evidence showed that progress had already been made and was having a positive impact. We suggested the plan continue to be used as a live working document, with evidence and actions clearly signposted to support ongoing evaluation of progress.

The service acted on feedback by expanding support across a wider area of Stirling and introducing crèche sessions to meet a range of additional support needs. This displayed a commitment to ensuring care was inclusive, accessible and responsive to families' feedback.

Small-scale development 'tests of change' were trialled and evaluated before being embedded in practice. This demonstrated a reflective approach to service improvement and a commitment to identifying effective ways of supporting families and promoting engagement.

Questionnaires and feedback demonstrated that the service was highly valued by children and families. One parent shared, "Please keep this service available to all families in Stirling because it provides such invaluable support." Families told us they felt listened to and included, with one commenting, "They ask the important questions to capture everyone's views." We discussed ways to make the impact of feedback more visible, for example through a 'You Said, We Did' approach. This would help showcase the positive changes already made to improve outcomes for children and families.

The service used a self-evaluation toolkit aligned with A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors (2025). This supported identify strengths and areas for development. This promoted reflection on practice, evidenced impact and informed clear next steps for continuous improvement.

Effective policies and risk assessments were in place to help keep children and families safe. We suggested that policies could be strengthened by including information on when notifications should be made to the Care Inspectorate, demonstrating the service's understanding of its regulatory responsibilities.

Robust induction and personal development processes supported staff to reflect on practice and continually develop their skills and knowledge. Very effective induction and personal development processes supported staff to reflect on practice and continually develop their skills and knowledge.

Staff brought a range of strengths and experience to the team. This resulted in children benefiting from

high-quality interactions and support that promoted their wellbeing, confidence, learning and overall development.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Playing, learning and developing

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.

Children experienced play spaces that reflected their interests, preferences and ideas. Their views were actively sought through personal plans and ongoing conversations, helping them feel valued and included in decisions about their play. Parents told us, "The children are included in the co-creation of the spaces and are asked their views on what they would like to see and experience whilst attending."

Although crèches often operated from community halls, children entered welcoming, stimulating spaces that had been carefully transformed to promote curiosity, exploration and enjoyment. Parents highly valued this approach, commenting that "The staff make every environment so engaging and inviting." Staff expertise in creating high-quality play environments was recognised externally, with opportunities to share their practice with college students and other professionals. This promoted ongoing reflection and dialogue, helping staff to continuously improve children's learning and development.

Staff responded sensitively to individual needs and interests, helping children settle at their own pace. We observed children leading their own play while benefiting from skilled adult interactions that extended their thinking, learning and enjoyment.

Singing, stories and group experiences brought children together, supporting communication, creativity and a sense of belonging. Staff also worked with other settings to reflect on the effective use of songs and stories in play, helping to keep children's learning experiences fun, engaging and enriching.

Children benefited from a wide range of inclusive and multicultural resources that helped them learn about themselves and others. Communication supports, including Makaton, visual timetables and objects of reference, enabled children to express themselves and participate fully in play and daily experiences.

Play was central to children's experiences with open-ended resources, loose parts, (everyday items with no predetermined purpose) supporting engagement. Creative materials and early literacy and numeracy opportunities encouraged children to investigate, create, imagine and solve problems. Children were free to explore according to their interests, which supported the development of their confidence, independence and new skills.

Families were supported to continue learning at home through shared resources, play ideas and strategies to promote wellbeing and emotional regulation. Schools, nurseries and community groups could also access play resources. This helped extend children's learning beyond the crèche and strengthened collaboration across the wider community.

Where children attended over longer periods, staff tracked the development of their skills and interests. We could see children progressing through naturally responsive interactions and experiences. To further strengthen this, we suggested recording more clearly how children's interests were extended and how additional challenge was introduced to support ongoing learning.

Children benefited from an inclusive approach where barriers to participation were actively identified and reduced. Staff worked closely with families to ensure children of all abilities, backgrounds and circumstances could access and enjoy high-quality play experiences. As a result, children experienced a strong sense of belonging and were supported to exercise their right to play in an environment where they felt respected, valued and included.

Children are supported to achieve — 5 - Very Good

Nurturing care and support

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.

Relationships were at the heart of the service. Staff were warm, caring and nurturing, building strong, trusting relationships with children and families. They recognised that for some children the crèche was their first experience away from home and worked closely with families through home visits, telephone calls and ongoing communication to support secure attachments and positive transitions.

Children's wellbeing was promoted through responsive interactions and personalised support. Staff used strategies from personal plans to help children regulate emotions, build confidence, resilience and independence. Children's voices, interests and needs shaped inclusive and meaningful experiences, while quiet spaces and sensory resources supported emotional wellbeing.

Venues were carefully planned to ensure children could play, learn and explore safely. Resources reflected children's interests and individual needs, helping them feel valued, secure and supported. We suggested where possible creating spaces to display children's artwork and store personal belongings, further strengthening children's sense of belonging, identity and ownership within the service.

Children's health, care and wellbeing were promoted through effective personal care planning, medication management, accident monitoring and the sharing of key safety information with families, including support and guidance on safe sleep practices. As a result, children were kept safe and families felt informed and supported in meeting their child's care needs.

Mealtimes were relaxed, social and child-led, encouraging choice, independence and positive interactions. Staff supported conversation and self-help skills in a calm environment. This showed that children were engaged in familiar routines and were developing confidence, social skills and positive relationships with others.

Parents spoke highly of the service, with one commenting, "Overall, it was such a positive experience for both my child and me. The staff, the environment, and the activities all made her feel happy, safe, and engaged. I felt completely confident leaving her in their care and would highly recommend this service to other parents." Another parent highlighted the positive impact the service had on families, noting that increased staffing would enable more children and families to access and benefit from the nurturing care and support provided.

Families were valued partners in their children's care and support. Strong communication, including photographs, journals, and Sway videos, kept families informed and engaged in their child's experiences. Children's achievements and progress were celebrated throughout each crèche block, and parents told us

that staff took time to get to know their child, understand their individual needs, and provide responsive, personalised support.

The service demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting children and families. Through effective partnerships with schools, health services, community organisations, and support agencies, families received timely advice, targeted support, and access to a wide range of opportunities. Crèche provision enabled parents and carers to attend training, support groups, education programmes and employment-related opportunities, with the reassurance that their children were safe, well cared for and enjoying positive play and learning experiences.

The service demonstrated a strong person-centred approach, listening to families and shaped crèche provision around their identified needs. This included providing culturally relevant resources in home languages, targeted outreach to underrepresented communities, and extending opportunities into rural areas to reduce isolation and improve access to high-quality crèche experiences, helping more children and families feel included, connected, and supported.

Complaints

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

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	5 - Very Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good

Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good

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

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