Sweetie Brae Private Nursery
Day Care of Children

101 Glasgow Road
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Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
14 July 2026

Service provided by:
Sweetie Brae Private Nursery Ltd

Service provider number:
SP2003001454

Service no:
CS2003006388

About the service

Sweetie Brae Private Nursery is a daycare of children service located within a residential area of Strathaven, South Lanarkshire.

The service is registered to provide care for a maximum of 50 children aged birth to those not yet attending primary school.

Children aged two years to those not yet attending primary school are cared for in dedicated playrooms on the ground floor. Babies are cared for in a dedicated playroom upstairs. Children have access to a sensory room and a sleep room. There is also access to an enclosed garden.

The service is close to local shops, parks and travel links.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 13 and 14 July 2026. 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 a small number of children using the service,
- gathered feedback from family members of children using the service,
- spoke with staff and management present on the days we visited the service,
- gathered feedback from 4 staff members using a questionnaire,
- gathered feedback from 17 family members using a questionnaire,
- observed staff practice and children's experiences, and
- 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.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm, caring relationships and felt safe, secure and valued within the nursery.
- Staff supported children's play and learning well, providing a range of experiences that promoted confidence, curiosity, creativity and independence.
- Children that required additional support were well supported through effective planning, partnership working and tailored approaches that helped them reach their full potential.
- Strong partnerships with families helped create a welcoming and inclusive nursery community. Parents felt involved, listened to and valued.
- Meaningful connections with the local community enriched children's experiences and supported a sense of belonging.
- The manager and staff demonstrated a strong commitment to reflection, self-evaluation and continuous improvement.
- Positive progress had been made across a number of improvement priorities, including learning environments, resources, planning and assessment approaches.
- The service should continue to build on resources, including loose parts and natural materials, to further enhance opportunities for play and exploration.
- Children benefited from a welcoming, well-maintained environment that supported their wellbeing, learning and development.

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	4 - 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. There were important strengths within the setting's environment, with some aspects identified for further development.

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

The service vision, values and aims had been reviewed with input from children, families and staff. These were displayed throughout the nursery using child-friendly images, helping to make them meaningful and accessible. We saw them reflected in everyday practice, with children's rights woven throughout the ethos of the nursery and aligned with its motto of "Sowing Seeds to Success". Children were valued, respected and encouraged to have their voices heard. This helped create an environment where children were supported to develop confidence, make choices and reach their full potential.

The manager demonstrated a clear understanding of the nursery's strengths and areas for development and spoke openly about the improvement journey. The service engaged positively in the inspection process, willingly sharing progress made and showing openness to feedback and suggestions. Staff also reflected positively on changes that had been introduced and the impact these were having on practice.

Children, families and staff were actively involved in shaping developments within the nursery. The service recognised the importance of participation and regularly sought views through a range of approaches, including parent and children's committees, newsletters, a closed Facebook group and daily conversations at drop-off and pick-up times. This helped foster a strong sense of community and ensured that developments reflected the views and experiences of children, families and staff.

Parents told us they felt involved in the life of the nursery and valued opportunities to contribute. Comments included, "There are regular opportunities to feed back", "I'm very involved in the nursery and its activities. I feel like my opinion, and the opinion of my child, is welcomed and listened to". Another commented, "There are parent and child councils which everyone has the opportunity to be a part of. Over and above that, the manager is very approachable and takes on feedback given".

The manager spoke positively about recent participation in the Care Inspectorate Improvement Programme. The programme had supported reflective practice, encouraged professional dialogue and helped drive continuous improvement. Changes had been introduced at a manageable pace for the staff team, helping improvements become embedded in everyday practice. The service should now focus on sustaining this progress to ensure children continue to experience positive care and support.

There was a clear focus on supporting the further development of leadership within the nursery. Senior staff spoke positively about the support and guidance they received, and the opportunities that had been provided to strengthen their skills and experience. The manager shared plans to continue supporting staff in their roles and to further develop leadership across the team. This will help sustain ongoing improvement and ensure children continue to benefit from the support of a skilled and knowledgeable staff team.

A quality assurance calendar supported the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of key areas of practice, including the environment, resources and lunchtime experiences. Regular audits, observations and discussions helped leaders identify strengths and areas for improvement. A meaningful improvement action

plan, informed by ongoing self-evaluation, supported a focused approach to improvement. This contributed to a culture of reflection and continuous improvement.

We saw positive progress being made in a number of areas identified for improvement, including the further development of planning, tracking and assessment processes, learning environments and resources. For example, floor books had been introduced to support planning and children's learning, an environmental audit informed the ongoing review and enhancement of spaces and resources, and children benefited from the continued development of the sensory room.

Good progress had also been made in addressing actions identified at the previous inspection, including improvements to mealtimes and outdoor maintenance. These changes helped provide children with safer and more positive experiences.

Staff felt well supported by management. They spoke positively about opportunities to reflect on practice, share ideas and contribute to improvement. Regular meetings, daily discussions and visits to other settings supported professional learning and the sharing of good practice. This helped develop staff knowledge and skills and contributed to ongoing improvement across the nursery.

Staff had been safely recruited and were well supported when starting their role. New staff benefited from mentoring arrangements and the use of the national induction resource, which helped them develop the knowledge, skills and understanding required for their role. Staffing arrangements were in place to cover holidays and absence, helping to promote consistency for children and continuity in the care and support they received.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces — 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good. There were important strengths within the setting's environment, with some aspects identified for further development.

Quality Indicator: Children thrive and develop in quality spaces

The nursery was welcoming, comfortable and homely. One parent told us, "The nursery has a home-from-home feel. My child is happy to go to nursery, play with their friends and be with the staff." As a result, children were supported to feel secure and settled within their environment.

Playrooms were bright, well-ventilated and organised to support children's independence. Information was displayed throughout the nursery to keep families informed and involved in nursery life. Children had access to a range of resources, which were stored at low level to support independence and choice.

We saw that improvements had been made to resources across the nursery. The manager recognised that this remained an ongoing area for development and was using an environmental audit to help identify future priorities. The service should continue to build on available resources, including loose parts and natural materials, to provide children with a broader range of opportunities for play and exploration.

The premises were well maintained and systems were in place to identify and address maintenance issues. Recent improvements to outdoor fencing enhanced safety for younger children and helped create secure spaces for play.

A secure entry system and visitor sign-in procedures were in place to help keep children safe. During the inspection, a minor maintenance issue was identified with a room door. Prompt action was taken to address this, demonstrating a responsive approach to maintaining children's safety and wellbeing.

Children benefited from access to outdoor environments that supported their learning and development. The recently enhanced outdoor area for children aged two to three years provided increased opportunities for engagement, exploration and enjoyable play experiences. Babies also had access to outdoor spaces and regular opportunities to explore the local community and environments beyond the nursery grounds. This meant children could enjoy a range of experiences that supported their curiosity and learning.

Infection prevention and control procedures were embedded within daily practice. We observed staff wearing aprons and gloves when changing children and promoting handwashing throughout the day, including before meals and following personal care routines. Improvements relating to storage within the staff toilet were discussed with management and agreed actions were identified. As a result, children benefited from being cared for in a clean, safe and hygienic environment.

Risk assessments and policies had been reviewed and updated to reflect current practice. Accident records were monitored by management and action was taken where patterns or concerns were identified. This supported children's safety and wellbeing.

Medication was not required by any children at the time of the inspection. We reviewed the service's medication procedures and documentation and identified a small number of additions to further strengthen recording and align with current best practice. The manager agreed to take these forward.

Clear routines were in place to maintain the environment throughout the day. Housekeeping arrangements supported the upkeep of the nursery, and staff took responsibility for maintaining cleanliness within playrooms. As a result children experienced a clean, welcoming and comfortable environment.

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of sun safety. Children had access to shade, drinking water, hats and sun cream when required. Staff used UV index guidance to support decision-making about outdoor play and sun protection measures. This helped ensure children could enjoy outdoor play safely.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good. There were important strengths within the setting's environment, with some aspects identified for further development.

Quality Indicator: Playing, learning and developing

Children were happy, confident and actively engaged in their play. They moved freely between experiences, made choices and led their own learning. Children used their imagination well and engaged purposefully with available resources. As a result, children experienced play that was enjoyable, meaningful and responsive to their interests.

Children benefited from regular access to free-flow outdoor play and learning. Staff recognised the value of outdoor experiences and provided opportunities for children to explore the garden, local community and wider environment. Staff and children spoke positively about visits to the local park, highlighting activities such as ball games, parachute games and using climbing equipment. This supported children's confidence,

physical development and enjoyment of being active outdoors.

Meaningful connections with the local community further enriched children's experiences. Children regularly visited local places, including the forest and dairy farm, and children of all ages attended visits to the local sheltered housing. Staff spoke positively about the value of intergenerational experiences, which helped children build relationships with others and develop a sense of belonging within their community. Activities such as Book bug sessions provided additional opportunities for learning and enjoyment. The parent committee also played an active role in supporting a range of opportunities for children.

Staff responded well to children's interests and ideas. Positive interactions were observed throughout the session. Staff joined children's play and, at times, extended learning through conversations and encouragement.

Older children engaged in a variety of sensory and creative experiences. They enjoyed mark making with pens and pencils, exploring citrus fruits in water and using teapots, spoons and ice to fill, empty and mix. Children also created potions using herbs and explored different scents. This encouraged curiosity, creativity and imaginative play.

Younger children enjoyed exploring water play, transporting water between containers and observing how it moved. They also engaged in painting, playdough and role play with baby dolls. Children enjoyed filling and emptying activities and exploring sea creatures outdoors. Children were encouraged to be helpers and take on responsibilities as part of daily routines. Staff recognised their efforts through praise and encouragement. This helped develop confidence, independence and a sense of achievement.

Babies were engaged in a range of enjoyable experiences, including a pretend picnic, exploring mirrors, listening to stories and joining in with songs and rhymes. They also enjoyed soft play, dolls and prams, and rolling and throwing beach balls. Staff were attentive and responsive, supporting babies as they explored and played. This provided opportunities to develop communication, physical and social skills.

Parents agreed there was a wide variety of experiences available to their children. One parent told us, "From arts and crafts to baking and outdoor play, the nursery goes above and beyond to facilitate all types of experiences for children. I love how the older children have the opportunity for outdoor forestry sessions, music and Book bug. The nursery do so much with the children".

We saw progress in the development of planning and assessment approaches. Floor books were in place and offered children opportunities to revisit and reflect on their learning. The manager recognised that this remained an ongoing area for development. Further work is needed to ensure planning consistently reflects children's interests, strengths and next steps in learning, supporting experiences that are meaningful, responsive and tailored to individual children.

Professional learning had supported staff knowledge of play, learning and child development. We discussed the benefits of further learning opportunities to strengthen staff confidence in extending children's learning through effective questioning and a deeper understanding of schematic play. The manager recognised the value of continuing to develop staff knowledge and practice in these areas. This should help staff build on children's interests and extend learning through play.

Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

We evaluated this quality indicator as good. There were important strengths within the setting's environment, with some aspects identified for further development.

Quality Indicator: Nurturing care and support

Children were relaxed, settled and comfortable within the nursery. Staff had developed caring and nurturing relationships with children and demonstrated a good understanding of their individual needs. One parent commented, "The personalised care my child receives is fantastic. They are well known, very well cared for and I feel as though the relationship I have with the manager and the rest of the team makes them an extension of our family." As a result, children experienced care that helped them feel safe, secure and valued.

Staff knew children well. Personal plans were in place and contained information about children's individual needs. A range of records informed these plans and helped staff understand children's care and support requirements. Systems for managing personal plans should now be further developed to provide a clearer overview of information, support consistency and ensure key information is routinely shared with families.

Additional support plans were developed where required and clearly identified strategies, supports and involvement from other professionals. Staff worked closely with families and partner agencies to help ensure children received the right support at the right time. The manager had also developed a resource hub to provide staff with tools and information to further support their knowledge and practice.

Staff had completed child protection training and understood their responsibilities in keeping children safe. They were aware of the action required if they had concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing. This helped ensure children were protected and supported appropriately.

Staff responded sensitively to children's emotional needs and cues. We observed strong attachments and positive interactions throughout the visit. Children confidently sought comfort and reassurance from familiar adults. This demonstrated trusting relationships which supported children's wellbeing.

The service was working towards becoming an attachment-informed accredited setting. A number of attachment "puzzle pieces" had already been achieved, and staff were using the framework to reflect on and enhance practice. This supported a nurturing culture where positive relationships were valued and promoted.

Positive partnerships with families helped staff develop a strong understanding of children's routines, preferences and support needs. Daily communication kept families informed about their child's day and supported continuity between home and nursery.

Transitions into and through the nursery were well supported. Information gathered during settling-in visits, discussions with families and personal plans helped staff provide consistent care and support. Children were supported to move between rooms and on to school in a planned and thoughtful way.

Mealtimes were calm, relaxed and unhurried. Improvements had been made since the previous inspection. Staff sat with children, chatting with them and supporting their safety while eating. Children were encouraged to pour drinks, clear plates and make choices, helping to develop their confidence and independence. Babies were well supported at mealtimes and encouraged to develop their self-feeding skills, with staff providing praise and assistance when required. This supported children to enjoy positive mealtime experiences and develop independence.

The manager welcomed feedback and had already acted on some suggestions discussed during the inspection, including plans to introduce a serving table within the baby room to create more space during mealtimes. We also discussed revisiting Setting the Table guidance to explore a wider range of meal options and alternatives. This will help further enhance children's mealtime experiences.

Children were encouraged to develop independence throughout the day. Staff provided respectful and sensitive support during personal care routines and encouraged children to develop self-help skills with toileting, dressing and handwashing where appropriate.

Nappy changing and toileting were carried out with minimal disruption to children's play. Children's wellbeing was further supported through opportunities for rest and sleep, with staff following individual routines and ensuring comfort items were available when needed. This helped support children's confidence, independence and wellbeing.

The nursery made good use of available space to support children's wellbeing. In particular, the sensory room provided opportunities for relaxation, sensory exploration and individual support. Children were able to access calm experiences which supported emotional wellbeing and self-regulation.

Close connections with families were a strength of the service. Families were encouraged to be involved in nursery life through a range of events and activities. These included parent committee meetings, Cuppa, Cake and a Blether, Gala Day, Christmas events and the nursery fair. The manager was passionate about maintaining and strengthening these opportunities. One parent shared, "Being part of the PTA has been a lovely way to get to know the team, work closely with them on events like the Christmas Fair and Gala Day and the parents coming together is lovely for us as a community too". This helped create a strong sense of community and belonging for children and families.

Families spoke positively about the care and support provided. They valued the relationships staff had developed with their children and described the nursery as welcoming and supportive. Comments included, "The staff team are so nurturing, friendly and happy", "Sweetie Brae is a brilliant nursery, loads of resources, excellent staff and always put the kids first", "The manager and their team make the nursery a lovely place", and "Sweetie Brae Nursery is incredibly compassionate and supportive. I feel like my children's needs, and the needs of our family are met with true care and dedication."

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

To help ensure children are kept safe in an inviting, welcoming and clean setting, the provider should improve the maintenance and cleanliness of the environment.

This should include, but not limited to, improving infection, prevention and control practices and ensuring garden fences are suitable and maintained.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'My environment is secure and safe' HSCS 5.17) and 'I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment' (HSCS 5.22)

This area for improvement was made on 22 October 2025.

Action taken since then

The environment was clean, welcoming and inviting. Arrangements were in place to maintain cleanliness, with staff and housekeeping staff working together throughout the day.

Maintenance systems, including repairs logs, risk assessments and daily safety checks, supported a safe environment for children.

Improvements had been made to outdoor fencing, enhancing the safety of outdoor play areas.

Good infection prevention and control practices were observed, and plans were in place to address a minor storage issue identified during the inspection.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children experience a calm and relaxing mealtime that supports their independence, the provider should review mealtime routines.

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 meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible (HSCS 1.35)

This area for improvement was made on 22 October 2025.

Action taken since then

Mealtimes had been reviewed and improvements had been made, with ongoing evaluation supporting further development. We observed mealtimes to be calm, relaxed and unhurried. Staff sat with children, engaging in conversation and providing appropriate support and supervision during meals.

Children were encouraged to develop their independence through everyday mealtime routines. For example, they poured their own drinks, cleared away their plates, washed their hands before and after meals and made choices about where they wished to sit.

The manager recognised the importance of continuing to review mealtime experiences to ensure they remain appropriate to children's age and stage of development, including consideration of opportunities for self-serving.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support children's learning and development, management should review planning systems to ensure children's experiences are reflective of child development, their interests and individual needs. This includes ensuring there are enough toys and materials.

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 can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

This area for improvement was made on 24 April 2024.

Action taken since then

Since the previous inspection, planning systems and resources had been reviewed to better support children's learning and development.

An environmental audit had been introduced to identify priorities for improvement and was being used to support ongoing developments. Additional resources had been purchased, with staff and children involved in identifying resources that reflected children's interests and needs.

We saw progress in the development of planning approaches. Floor books and mind maps were being used to capture children's interests and support more responsive planning.

The manager and team leaders recognised this remained an ongoing area of development and were continuing to monitor and strengthen these approaches.

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.scot.

Detailed evaluations

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	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	4 - Good
Nurturing care and support	4 - Good

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