Scruffs Registered Childcare
Day Care of Children

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Castle douglas
Oakwell.industrial estaye
DG7 1LA

Telephone: 01556 502 205

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
3 July 2026

Service provided by:
Scruffs Childcare Limited

Service provider number:
SP2010011119

Service no:
CS2009234649

About the service

The service is based within Scruffs, a daycare of children and out-of-school care setting, and children are accommodated in one main playroom. Out-of-school care is in the same space. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor garden. Scruffs early years and out-of-school care is located in a residential area in the town of Castle Douglas. The service has sole use of the premises and the outdoor play area. Children can move between indoors and a secure outdoor area. The centre is within walking distance of local amenities.

The service is registered to provide day care for children, with a maximum of 34 children at any one time aged from five months to 12 years of whom no more than nine are under two years old. At the time of our inspection, 65 children were registered with the service.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Thursday, 2 July and Friday, 3 July 2026, between the hours of 09:30 and 16:30 on day one, and 09:45 and 15:15 on day two. 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
- received completed electronic questionnaires from eight families and two members of staff
- spoke with the staff and the management team
- 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 and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, improvements were identified relating to core assurances. We have reported where improvements are needed throughout this inspection report.

Key messages

- Strong, values-led leadership created a reflective culture where feedback and improvement activities enhanced outcomes for children and families.
- Robust quality assurance, professional learning and safer recruitment supported high-quality experiences, wellbeing and progress for children.
- Children were highly engaged in meaningful, interest-led learning experiences that promoted confidence, curiosity and ongoing development.
- Skilled staff interactions extended learning and supported children to achieve positive outcomes through play and exploration.
- Children felt safe, respected and valued through nurturing relationships, which promoted confidence, wellbeing and secure attachments.
- Strong partnerships, responsive care and effective safeguarding ensured children received consistent support tailored to their individual needs.

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

Quality indicator: 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.

Leaders demonstrated a clear and ambitious vision that was shared with children, families and staff. The service values, vision and aims had been developed with meaningful involvement from children and families and were embedded throughout the setting. Staff were confident in discussing the values and could clearly describe how they guided their practice and supported positive outcomes for children and families. Children were familiar with the values and encouraged to contribute to the service's caring and inclusive ethos.

Leadership was strongly values-led and had created a positive, reflective culture where staff felt respected, supported and empowered to contribute to improvement. Staff demonstrated a high level of professional reflection and identified both strengths and areas for development in their practice. For example, staff discussed plans to further improve the observation format to make it more meaningful and accessible to children. This demonstrated a well-established culture of continuous improvement.

Robust quality assurance processes were in place and were having a positive impact on children's experiences and learning. Leaders maintained a clear overview of children's progress through personal planning, learning journals, famly app and regular observations. Information was gathered systematically and used effectively to identify next steps for individual children and to improve services. Daily discussions between staff ensured observations informed responsive planning and meaningful learning experiences.

Self-evaluation was embedded within the life of the service and involved staff, children and families. Leaders used a range of approaches to gather feedback and evaluate practice. Improvement priorities were supported by set targets, enabling the team to monitor progress and identify areas for further development. There was a strong commitment to ensuring that improvement activity resulted in better outcomes for children and families.

Leaders effectively used feedback, evidence and reflective practice to drive meaningful change. Families' views were valued and used to shape children's experiences. For example, when a child demonstrated a significant interest in dinosaurs, staff responded by developing a dinosaur-themed garden area, creating rich opportunities for play, learning and exploration. This responsive and child-centred approach enhanced children's engagement and sense of belonging.

The service demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainable and research-informed improvement. Professional learning has influenced practice in meaningful ways. Staff described how learning from Froebel training had supported the development of the outdoor environment, including the polytunnel project. Leaders were also exploring ways to reintroduce woodworking experiences to further extend children's creativity, problem-solving skills and opportunities for risk-aware play.

Safer recruitment procedures were well established and supported the development of a stable, skilled workforce. Appropriate checks were completed, and staff understood their responsibilities regarding safeguarding and promoting children's wellbeing. Leaders recognised the importance of continually

reviewing policies and procedures to ensure they remained relevant to the service and reflected its values and practice.

Staff spoke very positively about the high-quality induction, mentoring and ongoing support they received. New staff were effectively supported to develop confidence and competence in their roles. Team members described the manager as approachable, knowledgeable and consistently available to provide guidance and encouragement. This strong leadership contributed to a motivated workforce and a positive culture of learning and improvement.

Overall, leadership and management were very effective. Leaders had created a supportive, ambitious and reflective culture where children, families and staff were valued partners in improvement. Parents shared with us, "Our son loves scruffs. He is settled there and enjoys going. Staff members are competent and helpful," and "Development and progression is outstanding." This was resulting in very good outcomes for children and supporting continuous improvement across the service.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Play, learning and development

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 very good opportunities for play, learning and development. Staff created a nurturing and stimulating environment where children were highly engaged in both spontaneous and planned experiences. Learning was firmly based on children's interests, helping to sustain curiosity, involvement and enjoyment. During the inspection, children remained engaged throughout the session. Parents told us, "Being given lots of hands on opportunities to explore different things which we don't always have time for at home," and "The growth, the confidence built, the safety they feel to let their own individual personalities show through." For example, a child with a strong interest in spiders explored a fact book alongside a staff member, who sensitively supported their learning by sharing information and encouraging discussion. This promoted children's curiosity and deepened their understanding of the world around them.

Planning for learning was child-centred and responsive. Staff used observations effectively to identify children's interests, strengths and next steps. A balance of child-led and adult-led experiences ensured children could lead their own learning while also benefiting from carefully planned opportunities to extend their skills. Children's achievements and progress were recorded and shared with families through learning journals, famly app and floor books. Staff used observations, learning intentions, success criteria and evaluation to ensure experiences were meaningful and supported progression. During the inspection, children were observed participating in a variety of experiences that reflected their individual interests and developmental stages. Some children were planting and caring for flowers and vegetables within the polytunnel, while others were developing their physical skills through an obstacle course or exploring creativity and investigation through coloured water play.

Children benefited from a rich learning environment that supported the development of language, literacy and numeracy skills through meaningful play experiences. A wide range of books was available across all playrooms and outdoor spaces, encouraging children to develop a love of stories and reading. Children were observed listening attentively and engaging enthusiastically in storytelling experiences. Opportunities to develop numeracy skills were naturally embedded throughout the environment. For example, children

measured the growth of sunflowers, helping them develop an understanding of size, comparison and number for a real purpose. Singing, music and everyday conversations further supported children's language development and communication skills.

The quality of interactions between staff and children was a significant strength of the service. Staff knew children well and used observations effectively to identify when additional support, challenge or encouragement was needed. Interactions were warm, respectful and focused on promoting children's thinking and problem-solving skills. Staff used open-ended questions and skilled scaffolding techniques to extend learning and deepen children's understanding. For example, during water play, staff encouraged children to predict what might happen when different coloured water was mixed together. Similarly, when discussing spiders, staff asked questions, such as where spiders live and what they eat, encouraging children to think critically and build on their existing knowledge.

Overall, children experienced very good quality play and learning experiences. Staff were responsive, reflective and skilled in supporting children's interests, curiosity and development. As a result, children were highly engaged, motivated learners who were developing a broad range of skills through meaningful and enjoyable play experiences.

Children are supported to achieve — 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: 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.

Children experienced very good nurturing care and support from staff who knew them well and responded sensitively to their individual needs. Staff had developed warm, trusting relationships with children and families, helping children to feel safe, secure and valued. Care routines were unrushed and child-centred, allowing children to develop confidence and emotional wellbeing. Staff spoke positively about attachment training and described how this had encouraged them to slow down, follow children's cues and respond to individual needs in a nurturing way.

Children's rights, inclusion and participation were embedded in daily practice. Staff consistently respected children's views and choices and ensured children were involved in decisions affecting them. During the inspection, staff were observed seeking children's consent before offering comfort or physical reassurance. For example, staff got down to the children's level and asked what they needed before offering a cuddle or support. This promoted children's rights, dignity and sense of control.

Positive relationships were evident throughout the service. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of each child's personality, interests and wellbeing needs. Personal plans sampled during the inspection were of a good quality and accurately reflected the children observed. Information was regularly shared with families, helping to ensure a consistent approach between home and the setting. A parent told us, "Good communication and support from staff." Another parent shared, "I have attended a care plan meeting with my child's key worker to discuss their development." As a result, children experienced continuity of care and support from adults who knew them well.

The service had created a welcoming environment for families. Parents were encouraged to spend time in the setting and had access to playrooms, which helped them feel involved in their child's experiences and

strengthened partnerships between home and the service. A parent shared, "The staff at Scruffs have been very welcoming in the few months that my child's been attending, with him being so young I of course had concerns of him attending nursery however the staff couldn't have been more accommodating and gave daily updates to myself with photos." Open communication supported positive relationships and helped staff respond effectively to children's changing needs.

Medication procedures were well managed. Appropriate records, permissions and training arrangements were in place to support the safe administration of medication. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of individual children's health needs and confidently explained the procedures they followed to ensure children received appropriate care and support.

Accidents and incidents were recorded appropriately, and staff were able to discuss actions taken to support children's safety and wellbeing. There was evidence that incidents were reflected upon and used to inform practice. This helped promote a culture of continuous improvement and supported positive outcomes for children.

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of their responsibilities regarding safeguarding and child protection. Training had been completed, and staff were able to confidently describe the actions they would take if they had concerns about a child. Children benefited from a staff team committed to keeping them safe and promoting their wellbeing.

Overall, children experienced very good nurturing care and support. Strong relationships, respectful interactions, and child-centred approaches ensured that children felt safe, listened to, and valued. As a result, children were supported in developing confidence, wellbeing and secure attachments, leading to very good outcomes.

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 ensure children feel safe, secure and respected, and understand they have rights, the manager should implement training and monitor practice to develop staff skills and knowledge that are consistent with rights-based childcare.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'I am supported to understand and uphold my rights' (HSCS 2.3); and
'My human rights are central to the organisations that support and care for me' (HSCS 4.1).

This area for improvement was made on 19 July 2022.

Action taken since then

Staff consistently promoted a rights-based approach by interacting with children at their level, using warm, respectful communication, and seeking consent where appropriate. For example, staff asked children questions such as, "Would you like a cuddle?" and "Would you like your face wiped?", ensuring that children were involved in decisions about their care and support.

Personal care routines, including nappy changing, were carried out with dignity and respect, with staff maintaining children's privacy and providing reassurance throughout. Staff demonstrated strong, nurturing relationships with the children and had developed secure attachments, helping children to feel safe, secure, valued, and respected within the setting.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

The provider should make improvements to the medication processes within the service to ensure they comply with Care Inspectorate's guidance; "Management of Medication in Daycare of Children and Childminding Services". The provider should ensure:

(a) Medication and supporting permission information are stored appropriately, to ensure staff can quickly locate the medication, consent and dosage instructions.

(b) Effective quality assurance processes are in place and monitored by management to ensure the safe administration of medication.

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 I experience is safe and effective' (HSCS 1.24).

This area for improvement was made on 19 July 2022.

Action taken since then

Medication records and supporting paperwork were found to be in line with current guidance. Staff were knowledgeable about the service's medication procedures and were able to clearly explain the actions they would take in an emergency situation.

Staff demonstrated an awareness of how and where medication is stored. Allergy medication was stored in a high cupboard within the kitchen area to enable access when required, while inhalers were stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in the office. Staff were able to explain the rationale for these arrangements and how medication is kept safe while remaining accessible to authorised staff.

Discussions with staff indicated that they understood the importance of following individual medication plans, obtaining appropriate consent, and administering medication in accordance with recorded instructions. Management oversight and record-keeping processes were in place, with medication documentation being readily available and completed appropriately.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

The manager should take action to ensure appropriate infection prevention and control procedures are in place so that children experience a safe environment. In order to achieve this, action taken should include but is not limited to:

a) Ensure all areas of the service are free from unnecessary clutter to ensure cleaning arrangements can be effective.

b) Carry out an audit of infection prevention and control procedures throughout the service and make any improvements identified.

This is to ensure 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).

This area for improvement was made on 19 July 2022.

Action taken since then

The environment was observed to be significantly cleaner, tidier, and more organised, with unnecessary clutter having been reduced throughout the service. This supported effective cleaning arrangements and contributed to a safer environment for children. Good hand hygiene practices were consistently followed by both staff and children.

Children and staff washed their hands before and after lunch, helping to reduce the risk of infection transmission. Dining tables were cleaned before and after each sitting, demonstrating that staff were following appropriate infection prevention and control procedures.

The overall environment felt bright, clean, welcoming, and well cared for. Resources and play spaces were organised in a way that supported children's needs while maintaining a safe and hygienic setting. Staff demonstrated an awareness of infection prevention and control practices and their role in promoting children's health, safety, and wellbeing.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

Area for improvement 4:Leadership
To support a culture of continuous improvement, the provider should further develop and implement auditing systems to effectively monitor and evaluate service provision. In order to achieve this, action taken should include but is not limited to:

a) The implementation of an effective auditing system. Auditing procedures should include the day-to-day operation of the service, including staff training and development. Auditing procedures should include, but are not limited to, staff files, accidents and incidents, infection prevention and control procedures, and medication records.

(b) The manager should review and update their recruitment procedures and ensure that all aspects of safer recruitment are fully implemented. This will ensure the safety of children and young people, in line with

Scottish Government guidance 'Safer Recruitment Through Better Recruitment'.

This is to comply with The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/10), Regulation 9(1).

This is to ensure that 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 19 July 2022.

Action taken since then

The service had made progress in developing quality assurance and auditing processes to support continuous improvement. Staff were able to confidently describe the procedures in place for monitoring medication administration, accidents and incidents, and the associated recording and auditing arrangements. This demonstrated an increased awareness of governance systems and their role in promoting children's safety and wellbeing.

The service had introduced SMART targets to support improvement planning. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the changes being implemented, the reasons for these improvements, and the importance of reflecting on their impact. This approach supports a culture of continuous improvement and helps ensure that developments are meaningful and outcome focused.

Staff training records were well maintained and evidenced ongoing professional development. Training was being used effectively to inform practice and improve outcomes for children. For example, staff described how Realising the Ambition (RtA) training had influenced planning approaches and contributed to shaping the learning environment to better meet children's needs.

A sample of staff files showed that recruitment procedures were being followed appropriately and were in line with safer recruitment guidance. The service had reviewed and updated its recruitment policy and procedures to ensure that all aspects of safer recruitment were fully implemented, helping to safeguard children and young people.

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	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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