Little Stars Nursery
Day Care of Children

Little Stars Nursery
Kildean Business and Enterprise Hub
Drip Road
Stirling
FK9 4UA

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
7 July 2026

Service provided by:
Little Stars (Stirling) Limited

Service provider number:
SP2011011652

Service no:
CS2011299473

About the service

Little Stars Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 94 children not yet attending primary school at any one time, of whom no more than 24 are aged under two years; no more than 30 are aged two years to under three years and; no more than 40 are aged three years to those not yet attending primary school.

The service is located in Stirling within the Kildean Business and Enterprise Hub. Children have access to four playrooms, each with a cloakroom and appropriate changing and toilet facilities. There are enclosed outdoor areas with direct access from most of the playrooms. An office, reception and kitchen are also available. The service is located near local amenities, such as parks and shops.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 06 July 2026 between 08:30 and 17:00 and 07 July 2026 between 08:30 and 15:00. Feedback was shared with the service on 07 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, 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 21 completed questionnaires from families
- spoke with staff and the management team
- assessed core assurances, including the physical environment
- observed practice and daily life
- 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

- Staff interactions were responsive and meaningful, helping children feel valued, listened to and included.
- Personal plans were in place and developed with families; however, reviews and updates were not always consistent, limiting how effectively they reflected current needs.
- Most children were happy, engaged and confident, independently accessing resources and exploring their environment.
- Planning approaches were at an early stage, with scope to embed children's interests more fully to support responsive, meaningful learning.
- Positive relationships with families were evident, with parents describing staff as approachable and supportive.

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 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

Quality Indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources

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.

The service had a clear vision, values and aims that were reflected in practice and supported children's care, learning and wellbeing. The service was planning to review its vision, values and aims with children and families, to ensure they remained relevant and continued to support improvement.

Self-evaluation processes were at an early stage of development. Following the previous inspection, an action plan had been implemented to address requirements and areas for improvement. Management used the 'Stirling Mapping' document and termly quality indicator audits to identify strengths, areas for development and support reflection on practice. Further development of staged intervention processes had been identified as a priority moving forward. As a result, children benefited from a service that was increasingly using self-evaluation to improve the quality of care, learning and outcomes.

A quality assurance calendar was in place, outlining key monitoring and review activities, such as reviewing personal plans, conducting playroom observations and checking health and safety compliance. This supported a structured approach to self-evaluation and continuous improvement, helping to ensure tasks were completed regularly. This meant children benefited from a service that effectively monitored and improved the quality of care, learning and wellbeing.

An improvement plan was in place, identifying key priorities for development. Progress was regularly reviewed and the impact of improvements evaluated, supporting a focused approach to continuous improvement. This helped ensure children benefited from a service that actively reflected on practice and enhanced the quality of care, learning and outcomes.

A range of policies and procedures were in place and supported the consistent delivery of care. We discussed with the service to ensure all policies and procedures were reviewed regularly and updated in line with current guidance and best practice. This would help ensure children benefited from systems that promoted their wellbeing and safety.

The service had risk assessments in place to help keep children safe across the setting. We discussed making them more specific and ensuring all areas, including outdoor spaces were fully considered. This would strengthen the identification and management of potential hazards and help maintain a safe environment for children.

The service had identified family consultation as an area for development through its self-evaluation processes. Leaders had reflected on ways to enhance engagement and ensure family feedback informed service improvement. We discussed progressing these plans by providing a range of opportunities for families to share their views and contribute to service development. This would strengthen partnership working and help ensure improvements reflect the needs of children and families.

Staff completed professional learning opportunities both face-to-face and online platforms.

They maintained records of training and reflected on how it influenced their practice and improved outcomes for children. Staff photographs displayed at the entrance to each playroom highlighted those who had completed first aid and fire safety training, providing reassurance to families. Staff commented, "My training and learning have helped me provide better quality care and learning experiences for children" another shared, "My training has improved my confidence and knowledge, allowing me to provide better learning opportunities, support children's individual needs, and maintain a safe, nurturing environment." This ensured practice was informed by current knowledge and best practice.

Children play and learn 4 - Good

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing

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.

Interactions between staff and children were warm and supportive. Staff joined in play, shared stories and created meaningful learning experiences. During a bug hunt, children enthusiastically shared discoveries and explored the natural environment together. This helped children feel safe, valued and supported, while building their confidence, curiosity and social skills.

Children's voices were evident in mind maps displayed throughout the playrooms. For example, children contributed ideas about staying safe in the construction area, such as, "Keep the floor clear when building with the big blocks." This supported their understanding of risk and involvement in decisions that affected them. We discussed building on this approach to further strengthen children's participation and ensure their views consistently informed planning, evaluation and improvement.

The service had strengthened the availability of real-life and natural materials, particularly within the home corner, to support children's imaginative play and learning. Children used these resources purposefully, providing meaningful opportunities to develop creativity, independence and practical life skills. To strengthen practice further, the service should continue extending the use of real-life materials across the setting to promote enquiry, exploration, problem-solving and deeper learning.

'Little Stars Learning from Home' displays effectively captured and celebrated children's learning and achievements beyond the setting. Families shared photographs and information about experiences at home, helping to create meaningful links between home and the service. As a result, children developed a sense of pride in their achievements and a sense of belonging within the service.

Planning combined adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led approaches. Adult-initiated experiences were informed by observations, tracking information and professional judgement to support children's progress. Child-led experiences reflected children's interests and choices. Staff described using observations to create meaningful learning opportunities, ensuring planning remained responsive, child-centred and tailored to individual needs.

Observations of child-led experiences demonstrated children's interests, engagement and choice in learning. Displays and floor books effectively captured participation and showed children leading their own play and learning. The service should ensure observations and displays are consistently dated, include children's voices and identify next steps to better evidence progress and inform planning.

Children participated in a range of programmes, including Spanish and Enjoy-a-Ball, which enriched their learning and development. These experiences supported children to develop new skills, build confidence and engage in a variety of physical, social and learning opportunities. As a result, children benefited from a broad and stimulating curriculum that promoted their wellbeing, communication, physical development and enjoyment.

Tracking and monitoring were at an early stage of development. Management worked alongside staff to monitor children's progress and build a clear picture of their learning and development. Plans were in place to further develop the use of tracking information to identify trends, inform planning and targeted support when required. This would ensure children received timely support and learning experiences that responded to their individual needs, strengths and next steps in learning.

Online journals demonstrated children's learning and development and were linked to wellbeing indicators and the United Nations Conventions on Rights of a Child (UNCRC). Families contributed through photographs and comments, supporting continuity between home and the service. We discussed making learning possibilities more specific and linked to children's next steps. To strengthen practice further, the service should audit family participation to enhance engagement in children's learning.

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.

Staff provided warm, nurturing and caring interactions that helped children feel safe, valued and supported. They responded sensitively to children's individual needs and built trusting relationships. As a result, children appeared happy, secure and confident within the setting. Parents commented, "All staff are very friendly and outgoing. Very helpful with advice and encouraging words for both us and the children." Another shared, "Staff are friendly and approachable" and, "Staff are all lovely and know my children well."

Within each playroom, daily communication systems were used effectively to share important information, including allergies, medication requirements, bottle feeds and other individual care needs. This ensured that staff were well informed and able to provide consistent, responsive care throughout the day. This helped to promote children's health and wellbeing, while ensuring their individual needs were supported effectively.

Daily playroom checks and garden risk assessments were completed before opening and closing each day. These helped ensure the environment remained safe, clean and suitable for children, with any potential hazards identified and addressed promptly. As a result, children benefited from a safe and well-maintained environment that supported their wellbeing, learning and development.

Medication procedures were in place, with monthly audits completed to monitor compliance and support improvement. We discussed the importance of individual action plans for children with specific health needs. This helped support children's health, wellbeing and safety. Sleep routines were personalised and reflected information provided by families. Safe sleep guidance was followed, and children were monitored appropriately in calm, comfortable environments. This helped children feel secure, settled and supported, promoting their wellbeing and emotional security. The service should consider creating more clearly defined sleep areas to reduce distractions and further support children's rest and relaxation.

Mealtimes were relaxed and sociable, with staff sitting alongside children, encouraging conversation and supporting communication and social skills. Allergies and dietary requirements were managed effectively, and fresh drinking water was readily available. Children were supported to develop independence through age-appropriate opportunities, while staff demonstrated a good awareness of choking risks and provided appropriate supervision. This supported safe and enjoyable mealtime experiences that promoted children's wellbeing, independence and social development.

Transitions were in place to support children when starting at the service and when moving between playrooms. A transition record was used to capture how the transition had progressed, and any agreed actions required to support the child. As a result, children experienced continuity of care and support during periods of change, helping them to feel secure, settled and confident in their new environment.

Personal plans were in place and included key information about children's individual needs, preferences and routines. Families shared being fully involved in reviewing these plans, helping to ensure information remained accurate and up to date. This demonstrated effective partnership working and a commitment to personalised care. As a result, children received consistent, responsive support that promoted their wellbeing, inclusion and development.

Wall displays including 'Lunchbox Hints and Tips, Meaningful Mess' and 'Why Do Children Bite?' were used to share information and support families. They provided guidance on children's learning, development and wellbeing, helping families feel informed and supported. This strengthened partnerships between home and the service and contributed to positive outcomes for children.

Monthly newsletters kept families informed about children's learning, events and service updates, helping to strengthen partnerships between home and nursery. This helped families remain connected to the service and support their children's learning. We discussed ways to enhance communication and partnership working through greater family engagement and feedback.

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

Requirements

Requirement 1

By May 2026, the provider must ensure children are kept safe and protected.

To do this, the provider must, at a minimum:

a) ensure all staff register with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) within the required timescale

b) implement an effective system to support staff to maintain their registration.

This is to comply with Regulation 9(1) of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (SSI 2011/210). This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which states 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).

And is consistent with the Scottish Social Service Council code of practice that states: Support workers who need to be registered with the SSSC to meet and maintain their conditions for registration and the requirement for continuous professional learning and development (SSSC 3.4).

This requirement was made on 11 February 2026.

Action taken on previous requirement

The service has developed and implemented a grid showing all staff members, PVG number, start dates, SSSC number and the renewal date. This ensures that a system is in place to maintain dates and reduce the risk in the future.

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

To improve outcomes for children, the manager should develop an effective system of quality assurance and self-evaluation to support improvement planning. This should include but is not limited to:

a) establishment of effective quality assurance and self-evaluation processes; and

b) develop an effective monitoring programme, including individual support for staff.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HCSC) 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 11 February 2026.

Action taken since then

Since the previous inspection, the service have implemented a Quality Assurance calendar highlighting key dates. They are using local authority toolkits to support their self-evaluation processes. An Improvement plan and action plan are in place and are used as working documents.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children to achieve their potential, the service should improve how they track children's learning and monitor their progress. Staff should be supported to develop their understanding of how to effectively observe and assess children's learning in order to identify meaningful next steps.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state: "I am supported to achieve my potential in education and employment if this is right for me." (HSCS 1.27).

This area for improvement was made on 11 February 2026.

Action taken since then

Tracking & monitoring is in place for most of this session. This is still at the early stages and moving forward management has stated that they will be using the data to inform targeted groups.

Next steps were identified and learning possibilities set. Continue to review learning possibilities to ensure these are achievable. This will develop through online journal audits. This has been identified within their QA calendar moving forward.

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 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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