# Busy Bees at Forres Street
# Day Care of Children

4 Forres Street
Edinburgh
EH3 6BJ

Telephone: 01543 678 593

**Type of inspection:**
Unannounced

**Completed on:**
24 April 2026

**Service provided by:**
Busy Bees Nurseries (Scotland) Limited

**Service provider number:**
SP2003002870

**Service no:**
CS2017354651

## About the service

Busy Bees at Forres Street is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 85 children between the ages of three months and primary school age entry.

The service is located in the centre of Edinburgh, close to local amenities including parks, shops and public transport links. Children are accommodated across four levels of a townhouse, with access to a small garden area at the rear of the property.

The service works in partnership with Edinburgh city council to deliver funded early learning and childcare to eligible children.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday 21 April 2026 between the hours of 09:15 and 15:15. We returned on Wednesday 22 April between the hours of 09:00 and 15:30 to continue with the inspection. 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 to, and interacted with children using the service
- spoke with staff and the manager
- observed practice, daily routines and children's experiences
- reviewed documents relating to children's care and the management of the service
- took into account feedback from 15 families.

## Key messages

- Children were happy, well cared for and felt safe.  As a result, they were settled, confident and secure within the nursery.
- Children were confident and motivated in their play and made good use of both indoor and outdoor environments, supporting their wellbeing and learning.
- Personal planning and positive partnerships with families helped staff to understand children as individuals, contributing positively to children's experiences.
- Effective teamwork enabled staff to build positive, trusting relationships with children and families, contributing to consistent and supportive experiences.
- A clear commitment to improvement by management and staff supported a positive, forward looking culture.
- Continued development of the improvement plan will help support sustained progress and measurable improvements in children's experiences.

## 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 | 4 - 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 leadership team fostered a positive, inclusive culture underpinned by clear values. Staff consistently demonstrated values-based practice in their interactions with children. We observed staff showing warmth and kindness, listening to children and validating their feelings. As a result, children felt safe, secure and valued, which supported their wellbeing and engagement.

Parents shared very positive feedback about the service. They spoke warmly about the caring and supportive environment created by the management and staff team. Parents described feeling reassured that their children were safe, happy and well cared for, and they appreciated the welcoming and nurturing atmosphere within the nursery. One parent shared, "It gives us great peace of mind knowing our child is so happy and well looked after. We really appreciate all the hard work that goes into making the nursery such a positive place."

Since the previous inspection, the management team had strengthened approaches to self-evaluation in line with the Quality Improvement Framework. A range of meaningful methods had been introduced at a manageable pace, including regular team meetings that supported reflective discussion and effective use of challenge questions. This was beginning to result in a more consistent and shared approach to self-evaluation across the team.

The improvement plan was clear, purposeful and appropriately focused on addressing the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. In particular, the service had prioritised developments in self-evaluation, quality assurance and outdoor learning and experiences. While positive progress had been made, these approaches remained in development and were not yet fully embedded across practice. Moving forward, greater involvement of staff in leading and contributing to improvement actions would enhance shared ownership, support capacity building and further develop distributive leadership.

Quality assurance arrangements were in place to support ongoing improvement. A clear quality assurance and monitoring calendar helped to prioritise aspects of children's play, learning and development and promoted shared responsibility across the leadership team. As a result, leaders had a sound understanding of practice across the setting, however, systems to record and track themes and actions arising from monitoring should be further developed. These would help strengthen quality assurance and support leaders to demonstrate more consistently the impact of improvement activity on outcomes for children.

Families were involved in shaping service development, with their views gathered through a range of formal and informal approaches. Families told us they felt informed, included and able to contribute, describing open communication and approachable staff who valued their views. We discussed with the leadership team the benefit of developing more focused and systematic approaches to gathering feedback, with a clearer purpose. This would further strengthen partnership working and support ongoing improvement.

Safer recruitment practices were in place, and staff reported feeling well supported through induction. Staff described the team as welcoming and supportive, and we observed positive staff morale. Leadership was visible and approachable, with senior staff demonstrating growing confidence and enthusiasm. Despite previous challenges, the team showed strong commitment to working together and achieving positive outcomes for children. Staff reported a noticeable improvement in team morale and a shared, collaborative approach to 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.

Children were happy, confident and engaged in their play and learning. They moved independently and purposefully within the environment, making clear choices about their activities. They confidently approached staff to share their achievements and talk about their play, demonstrating secure attachments and trusting relationships.

Children's interests were recognised and meaningfully reflected within the learning environment. For example, space, planets and insects were incorporated into play experiences, supporting children to engage and sustain their learning. Staff described how a floor-based swamp area evolved responsively from children's interest in crocodiles. This provided rich opportunities for children to develop problem solving skills as they explored different ways to cross the swamp, encouraging experimentation, collaboration and perseverance. However, while staff were increasingly aware of children's interests, the depth and consistency of extending and building on these interests was not yet fully embedded across the setting.

Resources were generally well presented and accessible, supporting children to make meaningful choices and lead their own play. Since the previous inspection, the service had continued to develop the use of natural materials and loose parts, and this was beginning to positively influence children's play experiences, by encouraging exploration and creativity. Some areas of the environment, such as the home corner, would benefit from further development to more consistently offer rich and engaging learning experiences.

Children had regular access to a range of early literacy and numeracy experiences, including mark making, music, stories and elements of environmental print. Staff had identified further development, such as introducing self-registration routines and use of number cards at mealtimes. Implementing these planned approaches would help to strengthen and embed literacy and numeracy more consistently across daily routines.

A new planning approach has been introduced alongside established responsive and intentional planning formats. Staff reported that the approach supported a clearer focus on learning intentions and strengthened the purposefulness of planned experiences for children. However, there is some potential for planning to become too structured, particularly for less experienced staff. Ongoing leadership oversight and reflective dialogue will, therefore, be important. This will help ensure that planning remains flexible and responsive and is consistently informed by children's emerging interests and individual needs.

Floor books and online learning journals provided a positive and accessible record of children's experiences and supported effective sharing of learning with families. However, there were some variations in how consistently observations captured children's most significant learning. Continuing to strengthen staff confidence in identifying and recording meaningful observations, alongside planning next steps that are achievable, relevant and closely linked to learning, would further enhance assessment practice and support positive outcomes for children.

The outdoor environment provided a range of experiences, including crates and planks to support physical play and balance, opportunities for digging, a soil tray and access to books. These resources enabled children to engage in a variety of play experiences. To build on this, continued reflection and development of the outdoor space would help ensure it consistently offers well planned, stimulating and purposeful learning experiences that respond closely to children's interests and extend their learning further.

The service made good use of the local community to enhance children's experiences. Visits to the local library and play park supported children to develop a sense of belonging and an understanding of their wider community. Parents shared their children enjoyed lots of community activities and, "The Water of Leith as a learning resource, rather than just a walk has been brilliant."

## Children are supported to achieve 4 - Good

**Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support**

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 experienced warm, kind and caring interactions from staff who responded sensitively to their needs. Staff offered comfort and reassurance when required, which supported children's emotional wellbeing and helped them feel safe and secure within the setting. Parents shared their children had positive relationships with staff, and one family shared, "It's clear to see the staff care deeply for the health and wellbeing of the children and I'm glad it's the nursery we chose for our wee one."

Transitions for settling in arrangements for children were flexible in meeting individual needs. This supported the building of positive, trusting relationships. Transitions within the service were generally well managed, however, some daily transitions, particularly when preparing to leave for the park, were less well organised. On occasions, children experienced unnecessary waiting, which reduced their engagement and comfort. By strengthening the organisation and pacing of these routine transitions, staff would further enhance children's wellbeing, sustain their engagement and reduce frustration throughout the day.

Children's safety and wellbeing were supported effectively across the setting. Infection prevention and control arrangements were implemented consistently, with staff and children routinely washing their hands at appropriate times, including following personal care routines. Personal care was carried out in a calm, respectful and unhurried manner, which safeguarded children's privacy and dignity. Children were encouraged to be involved in their own care, such as pulling up their clothing, which helped promote their independence, confidence and self-esteem.

Children's wellbeing was supported through effective personal planning. All children had personal plans in place which set out how staff would meet their individual health, wellbeing and safety needs.

These plans were developed in partnership with families and reviewed regularly, ensuring information remained current and meaningful. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of children's individual needs and were able to describe the approaches and strategies they used within playrooms to support children effectively. However, recording of information for some children could be strengthened further to ensure that planning fully reflects their individual routines, needs and experiences.

Visual supports were used to support children's communication and to help them manage transitions throughout the day. Staff recognised the positive impact of these approaches on children's confidence and understanding and were taking appropriate steps to further embed the consistent use of now and next boards across the setting. For younger children, the introduction of signing, including a sign of the month shared with families, supported children who were not yet verbal to communicate their needs and make choices. This approach promoted continuity between home and the setting and strengthened inclusive practice by supporting children's early communication development.

Medication was stored securely and managed appropriately, with regular three-monthly audits supporting oversight and safe practice. However, medication information was not always consistently reflected on the room health needs summary sheets displayed within playrooms. Strengthening consistency in how medication details are recorded and shared, would help further support safe, clear and consistent medication management across the setting.

Mealtimes were calm, positive and sociable experiences that effectively supported children's independence and wellbeing. Staff sat with children, providing appropriate supervision, while encouraging meaningful conversation and social interaction. Children were confidently supported to pour their own drinks, serve food and clear away their dishes, which helped to build independence, confidence and self-esteem. Further opportunities should be encouraged to support younger children to develop independence at mealtimes, in ways that are appropriate to their stage of development. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of children's individual dietary needs, allergies and preferences. This ensured that children's health, safety and wellbeing were consistently promoted during mealtimes.

Staff demonstrated a good understanding of children and their families, which helped to create a warm and welcoming environment. Parents were welcomed into the setting during drop off and collection times, providing regular opportunities for informal communication and positive relationship building. One parent shared, "Communication is good, and we feel comfortable raising any questions or concerns. It feels like a partnership, which is really reassuring as a parent."

## 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 further support children's interests, development and learning, the service should continue to develop the outdoor space. Staff should evaluate the spaces to ensure children consistently experience an interesting and stimulating environment that captures their curiosity. This will ensure children engage in more purposeful play and learning.

**This area for improvement was made on 18 June 2025.**

**Action taken since then**

Since the last inspection, the service has prioritised the improvement of the outdoor space, which is a key focus within the current improvement plan. The area has been decluttered, unnecessary equipment removed and a shed dismantled due to disrepair, resulting in a safer and more purposeful environment. As a result, the outdoor space now offers increased opportunities for high-quality learning experiences. Children were able to engage in activities that supported their physical development and stimulated their curiosity, promoting active learning and exploration outdoors.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

**Previous area for improvement 2**

The provider should ensure that there are enough skilled and competent staff based within the nursery to ensure high-quality experiences for children.

**This area for improvement was made on 18 June 2025.**

**Action taken since then**

The staff team had remained stable since the previous inspection. Staff were either undertaking training or had completed relevant childcare qualifications within the past year, supporting the development of knowledge and skills across the team. During the inspection, we observed knowledgeable and skilled staff, who demonstrated a strong commitment to providing high-quality experiences for children. Staff were deployed effectively across the playrooms and were well supported by the leadership team when required, which contributed to positive interactions and continuity of care for children.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

**Previous area for improvement 3**

To support children's progression in their learning and development, observations should be regularly recorded and shared with families and identify children's progress in their learning. Next steps in children's development should be meaningful, achievable and monitored to ensure children are supported well to reach their full potential. Planning processes should be reviewed, clarified and improved.

**This area for improvement was made on 24 October 2023.**

### Action taken since then

Online learning journals provided a positive and accessible record of children's experiences, supporting meaningful engagement with families and effective sharing of learning. This contributed to children's continuity of learning between home and the setting. Further strengthening staff confidence in assessment, would enhance consistency in identifying next steps and support improved outcomes for children. A new planning approach has been introduced alongside established, responsive and intentional planning formats. This provided a focus on learning intentions and strengthened the purposefulness of planned experiences, helping staff to plan more effectively for children's progression in learning.

**This area for improvement has been met.**

### Previous area for improvement 4

To support children's wellbeing, learning and development, the provider should ensure they monitor the quality of provision across the service, and quality assurance processes are improved and impact positively on outcomes for children and families.

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); and "I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed." (HSCS 4.23).

**This area for improvement was made on 26 November 2024.**

### Action taken since then

Leaders had established quality assurance processes which supported ongoing improvement. A clear monitoring and evaluation calendar helped them to prioritise aspects of children's play, learning and development and encouraged shared ownership of quality across the leadership team. This enabled leaders to develop a good understanding of practice across the setting.

**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

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|---|---|
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| Playing, learning and developing | 4 - Good |

| Children are supported to achieve | 4 - Good |
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| Nurturing care and support | 4 - Good |

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