

Little Beehive Nursery Day Care of Children

70 Main Street
Strathkinness
KY16 9SA

Telephone: 01334 208 166

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
6 March 2023

Service provided by:
Little Beehive Nursery (St Andrews)
Limited

Service provider number:
SP2014012386

Service no:
CS2014332818

About the service

Little Beehive Nursery is a daycare of children service situated in the village of Strathkinness. It operates from a converted cottage set in a fully enclosed garden. The service provides funded early learning and childcare places for Fife Council, and provides care for a maximum of 56 children aged from birth up to 8 years. No more than 12 children aged under two years may be cared for in the baby room.

Children are accommodated in three spacious playrooms. There is a large, well equipped garden to the rear of the property and a smaller outdoor space that has direct access for children in the baby room.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 6 March 2023 between 08:00 and 17:45. Feedback was provided at the end of the inspection visit. The inspection was carried out by one inspector from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with several children in the service
- spoke with four families on the day of the inspection, reviewed five emails that families sent to us, spoke with one parent on the telephone and had a virtual meeting with one family
- spoke with the manager, director, and staff
- observed practice and staff interactions with children
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children benefitted from positive interactions from a staff team who were nurturing and responsive to their needs.
- Families had regular opportunities to be involved in their children's learning and in the development of the service.
- Children confidently led their own play and learning.
- High quality resources and play opportunities supported children's curiosity, enquiry, and creativity.
- A dedicated and knowledgeable staff team supported consistent care for children.
- Investment in the outdoor area provided a fun and exciting space for children to benefit from daily outdoor challenging play.

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1 - Nurturing care and support

Children experienced warm, nurturing and compassionate care. Positive relationships with families allowed for key information to be shared which promoted consistency in children's routines. This enabled staff to respond quickly and sensitively to changes in children's lives and supported them to achieve their potential. One parent told us, "Staff are so caring and really supportive and understanding of our child".

The service worked with other agencies to support children and families when required, such as the Speech and Language Therapy service. This ensured children received tailored approaches which were used consistently and effectively. Most children had identified next steps planned which were regularly reviewed to ensure progress was being made. We asked the service to ensure all children had next steps planned to allow achievements to be recognised and progress identified for all children.

Children were supported to understand and express their emotions through a variety of resources and activities. Staff had worked with children's mental health services to support emotional wellbeing. They held yoga sessions with children and supported them through guided meditations and breathing exercises suitable for their age and stage of development. One parent told us how much they had valued the input from nursery around emotions as it enabled their child to communicate their feelings.

Children's safety and emotional security were supported through individualised and sensitive arrangements for sleep routines. Staff had undertaken training by Safe Sleep Scotland and understood the importance of sleep for children's overall development. We observed staff providing a nurturing and calm approach when children woke by offering them cuddles.

Mealtimes provided opportunities for children to engage in conversations with their friends and develop some independence skills. There was scope to provide further opportunities to promote independence and the service were keen to engage children and staff in evaluating their experiences. This would enable children to develop important life skills and enjoy unhurried social experiences at mealtimes.

Quality indicator 1.3 - Play and learning

Staff had a very good understanding of child development, theory and best practice guidance and skilfully shared their individual learning with the wider staff team. One parent commented, "We love their Froebelian approach and the outdoor learning. This offers our child the perfect combination of what we would like them to have in terms of learning through play, immersion in the local community, exercise, cooking, baking, and spending time outdoors".

Children benefitted from a variety of planned play experiences which were responsive to their interests, including regular baking opportunities. Children told us they had enjoyed making fruit kebabs and pancakes. The service was participating in a programme called 'Soil to Slice', which involved children growing and harvesting their own wheat to make bread. Creative planning approaches to these experiences ensured children developed skills in language, literacy and numeracy.

Children's natural curiosity and creativity were enhanced through a range of resources and natural materials. Staff's approach to supporting child led play, enabled all children to discover and learn things for themselves. This approach fostered children's independence and problem-solving skills.

Strong partnership working provided opportunities for children and their families to learn and have fun together both in nursery and at home. There were resources children could use at home such as story sacks. A diary supported parents to understand the learning potential of these and share how they had enjoyed using the resources at home. This showed the service recognised the importance of promoting parental engagement to support children's outcomes.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided which impacted positively on children's outcomes, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 2.2 - Children experience high quality facilities

Play and learning opportunities were enhanced through the nursery environment which was well-designed, furnished to a high standard and comfortable. Children were engaged in their play and enjoyed showing us how they used the space. Children told us they enjoyed nursery and playing with their friends.

Children's artwork and photographs of them with their families were displayed throughout the service. This provided children with a sense of ownership of the space and promoted a strong sense that they matter.

Children's play and learning were enhanced through strong connections in the local community. Children regularly visited the church hall to enjoy physical play sessions, and they had a plot at the community garden where they learned about planting and growing. Children and staff joined residents at the local coffee mornings. This promoted a greater understanding and respect between generations and cultures and contributed to children building a sense of belonging in their community. One parent told us, "We are particularly impressed with the community links they build in the village".

Some staff had completed forest school training and children enjoyed regular visits to the nearby woodland. Families had recently been invited to attend a Stay and Play session in the woods. This allowed the service to share information with families on how they could support children's fun and safety in the outdoors.

The service were developing children's awareness of environmental issues as they had their Eco-schools Green Flag accreditation. Children had been involved in a beach litter pick and were developing their understanding of recycling. This showed the service's commitment to supporting children to understand how to take care of their environment.

Children experienced challenging and fun play experiences in a safe way. Risk assessments and daily checks were carried out to promote a safe environment for all children who were meaningfully involved in risk assessing. For example, staff carefully observed play and used effective questioning to ensure children had considered their safety when climbing and challenging themselves outdoors. Before a fire pit was introduced, staff supported children's awareness of the activity by introducing tea lights and discussing safe distances. This gradual approach developed children's confidence and ensured their safety.

Infection control practices minimised the potential spread of infection. Staff sensitively reminded and supported children to wash their hands at various times throughout the day, promoting a safe environment for children.

Children benefitted from significant investment in the nursery gardens. Children could choose when they accessed the garden, which provided fun play opportunities including loose part play and climbing frames to promote risk and challenge. One parent told us "my child is much more confident and loves challenging themselves with balancing games and climbing. I feel this is solely because of the emphasis the nursery place on physical and outdoor activity".

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided which impacted positively on children's outcomes, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 3.1 - Quality assurance and improvement are led well

The service was well led by a senior leadership team that promoted a clear shared vision and had high aspirations for children and their families. They had created conditions where all staff told us they felt confident to make suggestions for improvements and took responsibility for the process. Staff had taken on individual areas of responsibility and understood their role in the development of the service and improving children's experiences and outcomes. Staff also spoke confidently about their own professional development journey and how this supported outcomes for children. This showed staff were part of the service's commitment to continuous improvement and took responsibility for enhancing children's play and learning.

Parents told us they felt well informed of changes in the nursery and felt included by having frequent opportunities to discuss ideas. For example, parents were asked to share their views through general satisfaction questionnaires, which were collated and used to inform the service development plan. Staff, children, and families were asked to respond to a 'question of the month'. This was based around the improvement plan so they could monitor and evaluate their progress. A parent forum provided further opportunities for parents to share their views or concerns, and parents told us they had found the forum very useful. This helped the service to build trusting relationships with families and provide a service which met their needs, wishes and choices.

Floorbooks were used well in a variety of ways. They recorded children's varied interests across areas of the provision and were used as part of their quality assurance monitoring procedure. Staff took a shared responsibility to provide extensions in learning and worked together to review and evaluate children's progress. They creatively evidenced how they monitored children's experiences. This approach showed how they meaningfully involved children and families to influence change within the setting.

Regular team meetings enabled all staff to be included and contribute to the evaluation, review and development of the service. Meeting agendas created in advance, allowed staff to prepare for discussions and make effective use of the time available. Notes were available to all staff which ensured they were informed of discussions and allowed them to reflect on topics raised or decisions made. This promoted consistent practice and provided a clear understanding of responsibilities with agreed actions.

How good is our staff team?**5 - Very Good**

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided which impacted positively on children's outcomes, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 4.3 - Staff deployment

Children benefited from a caring and nurturing staff team who knew them and their families well. They were focussed and committed to providing high-quality care and support. Effective use was made of staff experience, knowledge, and skills, to ensure children's experiences across their whole day were positive. One parent told us, "The staff team care very deeply about looking after children well and giving them a stimulating environment".

Staff communicated very well with each other and worked well together. It was clear staff had developed positive respectful relationships. This allowed staff to flexibly support each other and meet children's needs.

The management team recognised and valued the importance of ensuring the service was appropriately staffed at all times. They told us of recent changes in their staff team and shared their difficulty recruiting appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Almost all parents felt that the management team had handled the staff turnover well. Parents liked that information about new staff was posted on the online communications app, which detailed their experiences with a personal message from them. This helped families get to know new staff and build relationships with them.

Staff understood their roles and responsibilities within each area of the nursery, which ensured key tasks were carried out and supported consistent practice. This helped to provide the necessary supervision of children and offered a breadth of opportunities and experiences.

There was a process for mentoring and supporting new staff using the Scottish Government's Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) National Induction Resource. Staff were given time to observe practice and support strategies being used for individual children, with opportunities for professional reflective discussions. This ensured consistent approaches for children and enabled them to receive high quality care and support. The manager was mentoring all new staff and we suggested staff could take more of a lead role in this area to enable them to provide peer support. This would build the capacity of the staff team and promote the development of leadership skills.

The service had been presented with the 'Millie's Mark' award which recognised their commitment to children's safety. The award provides reassurance that all qualified practitioners know what to do in a paediatric first aid situation. The service had demonstrated their learning was being regularly reviewed to ensure staff maintained confidence and were capable of responding quickly in an emergency.

Complaints

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

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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