# Inspection of Busy Bees at Maidstone Oakwood

Queens Road, Maidstone ME16 0JN

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| Inspection date: | 1 September 2025 - 24 September 2025 |

| **Overall effectiveness** | **Requires improvement** |
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| The quality of education | **Requires improvement** |
| Behaviour and attitudes | **Requires improvement** |
| Personal development | **Requires improvement** |
| Leadership and management | **Requires improvement** |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not applicable |

## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision requires improvement

The quality of teaching and children's overall experiences are variable. Inconsistencies in the support for some staff means that they do not have the knowledge and skills to confidently fulfil their roles. Despite this, staff know most of their key children well and have built good bonds with them. Children enjoy interacting with staff and go to them for comfort and reassurance.

Staff use space available within the nursery to help older children to focus and concentrate. Staff provide some interesting activities that children enjoy. For example, children show good levels of engagement when learning to use scissors. They listen to staff instructions and watch as they model what to do. On occasions, staff use props and stories to promote babies' engagement. Babies giggle as they copy animal noises. However, the organisation of some routines has an impact on how well children's individual needs are met. For instance, weaknesses in the organisation of daily routines mean that, at times, children become unsettled while waiting for staff to complete routine tasks.

Leaders and staff provide a curriculum based around children's interests. They use themes to support children to build their knowledge and skills and become curious learners. However, the weaknesses in the support for staff means that staff are not fully confident in how to implement the curriculum. This has an impact on children's learning experiences.

Children behave towards each other with kindness. Staff provide opportunities for children to share resources, and they enjoy playing together. For example, staff support children to work out how to complete a large puzzle together. If children have a disagreement, staff are quick to provide support and reassurance. They speak to children to help them understand how they are feeling and how to resolve conflict.

## What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Leaders have a clear intention about what they want children to learn, and this is shared with staff. However, the overall quality of teaching across the setting is not consistently good. Staff do not always plan activities that match children's stages of development or sustain their interest. Furthermore, these weaknesses are not swiftly identified by leaders to ensure that staff receive the support, coaching and training that they need to bring teaching to a consistently good level across the setting. As a result, children are not always making the progress that they are capable of.
- Staff use stories and songs to support children's language development. Most staff read engagingly, and children listen intently as they look at the pictures.

Children show they have developed a love of books and will select stories to sit and read with adults. During these interactions, staff allow children time to complete familiar sentences. They model words such as 'splish, splash' and 'squelch', which children then repeat back.

- Babies and children have opportunities to develop their physical skills. For instance, babies have access to climbing apparatus and learn to take safe risks with the support of staff they trust nearby. Older children are provided with tricycles, and experiences, which promote their fine motor development. For example, children enjoy using tweezers and pipettes to explore a range of sensory materials. This helps babies and children to develop a range of physical skills, in preparation for future learning.
- Parents receive information regarding children's next steps. For example, children with special educational needs and or/disabilities have plans in place to support their development, which is discussed and shared with parents regularly. Parents' feedback is positive. They are aware of who they can speak to in the setting regarding any concerns and know who their child's key person is.
- Staff support children to develop their independence. For example, they encourage children to wash their hands before lunch and change their shoes when they come inside. However, there are times throughout the day when staff become preoccupied with routine, domestic tasks. Children become unsettled as they are left waiting for periods of time without meaningful interactions.
- Children enjoy expressing their creativity and discovering the world they live in. This enhances their cultural understanding and highlights the similarities and differences they share with their friends. For instance, older children like to explore the works of various artists, with staff introducing figures, like Monet, to help them grasp new ideas. Children draw inspiration from this artist to create their own lily pads and understand their significance.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

**To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:**

- strengthen the supervision, coaching and monitoring of staff, to improve the quality of interactions, and the delivery of the curriculum, to raise teaching to a consistently good level
- improve the organisation of less effective parts of the daily routine to reduce the time that children need to wait without receiving any meaningful engagement from staff.

## Setting details

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| **Unique reference number** | 2823439 |
| **Local authority** | Kent |
| **Inspection number** | 10418754 |
| **Type of provision** | Childcare on non-domestic premises |
| **Registers** | Early Years Register |
| **Day care type** | Full day care |
| **Age range of children at time of inspection** | 0 to 4 |
| **Total number of places** | 65 |
| **Number of children on roll** | 81 |
| **Name of registered person** | Busy Bees Nurseries Limited |
| **Registered person unique reference number** | RP900821 |
| **Telephone number** | 01622 756667 |
| **Date of previous inspection** | Not applicable |

## Information about this early years setting

Busy Bees at Maidstone Oakwood re-registered in 2025 in a different setting. It is situated in Maidstone, Kent. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm, all year round. The nursery receives funding to provide free early education for children aged nine months to four years. There are 23 members of staff, 14 of whom hold recognised early years qualifications at level 3 or above.

## Information about this inspection

**Inspectors**
Nina Harvey
Kelly Southern

## Inspection activities

- The inspection started on 1 September 2025. Inspectors returned on 24 September 2025 to gather additional evidence in line with Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence policy.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation and spoke with staff.
- Parents shared their views on the nursery with the inspector.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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