

Little Einstein's Dundee Day Care of Children

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Dundee
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Telephone: 01382 813997

Type of inspection: Unannounced
Inspection completed on: 12 October 2016

Service provided by:
Forth Care Limited

Service provider number:
SP2014012365

Care service number:
CS2014332025

About the service

Little Einstein's Nurseries are part of a group of six nurseries, which are situated in various parts of Scotland. Little Einstein's Dundee is situated near the Hilltown of the city; the nursery is close to the town centre and other amenities. The nursery caters for the developing needs of children aged from six weeks to primary school age. Children are cared for by staff in various rooms according to their age and stage of development.

The nursery operates Monday - Friday offering sessions for full-time and part-time sessions between 7:00 am and 6:00pm. The service was registered to:

Provide a care service to a maximum of 43 children aged from six weeks of age to entry to primary school age, of whom no more than 12 can be under 2 years of age.

11 children 0 - under 2 years.

10 children 2 - under 3 years.

22 children 3 - to those not yet attending primary school

A minimum of two staff to be present in an operating playroom/area at any time.

The staff consisted of several Early Years Practitioners, modern early years apprentices, two deputy managers and a manager and a cook. The staff carried out domestic duties themselves. The service had their own training and administration service. The service stated the following principles of their service were:

- To provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment for all-round child development.
- To help children develop intellectually through a balance of directed and free choice activities.
- Continuity of care for all children and flexible care routines.
- To create a stimulating and challenging environment, providing opportunities for learning through play and covering the five key areas.
- To encourage children to develop self-control, self-direction and independence.
- To develop self-expression through various activities such as drama, music, storytelling, block building and other forms of play.
- To provide a warm and welcome atmosphere with good staff, child and parent relationships.
- To ensure a safe environment which protects children from harm, abuse and neglect.
- Develop respect for individual and cultural differences.
- Effective use of assessment information to identify needs and plan the next steps for learning and evaluating regularly to meet changing needs.
- High standard of thoughtful and courteous behaviour.
- A good clear concise monitoring and evaluation system and effective use of policies.

What people told us

We spent time observing children in the playrooms, playing outside in the garden, having snack and lunch. Many of the children were too young to express their views of the service. However, we saw that children were happy, settled and confident in the nursery and had built good relationships with staff. Some older children were happy to chat to the inspectors during the inspection and we observed them at play, their comments included:

'You can run around here really fast then slide down - whee - right down to the bottom'

'Can you play football with me?'

'This is me, I dreamed it, it's my mat'

'I've finished now, I've had enough'

'I had a shark attack on holiday'
 'I was at a different nursery, but I like this one'
 'I read that book in my bedroom - from the library - my mum got it'
 'That spider has lots of legs'
 'Mummy squashed the spider with her big shoe'
 'We're building stuff'

Six of the 16 Care Inspectorate parental satisfaction questionnaires were returned with these parents all expressing very high levels of satisfaction with the service. Five 'strongly agreed' and one 'agreed' with the statement 'Overall I am happy with the quality of care my child receives in this service.' Their comments included;

'My child has been at the nursery for over a year and she loves it! The staff are very friendly and always answer any questions that I have. Overall, we are very happy parents and I would definitely recommend this nursery to others'.

'My child has attended this nursery since nine months old and is about to turn 3. She loves the setting and all of the nursery staff. Overall, a happy parent'.

We spoke directly to one parent dropping her child at the nursery who also spoke very favourably about the nursery, which she had used for two children. She told us that her children were always happy to attend and that the nursery was very friendly and welcoming. She also said that she had seen great improvement to the nursery and felt that it had 'come on leaps and bounds'. She had great confidence in staff.

Self assessment

We received a completed self assessment and were satisfied with the way the nursery had completed this. They had provided us with a sufficient level of information about the service, how it operated, the improvements that had been made and their plans for further development. They should continue to develop their approach to self assessment extending their focus on outcomes for children and further considering how children, parents and staff can contribute to the process.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	4 - Good
Quality of environment	4 - Good
Quality of staffing	4 - Good
Quality of management and leadership	4 - Good

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

From the evidence gathered during our inspection, we evaluated this quality theme as good.

There was a welcoming atmosphere in the nursery, the environment felt calm and settled and we saw families being greeted warmly on their arrival. Children were seen to be happy, settled and confident throughout the nursery. They had formed positive relationships with staff and were well supported, which contributed to the overall positive nursery experience. Children were receiving care that was responsive and nurturing, we saw that babies had established trusting bonds with their carers, which was conducive to their well-being and development. They were cuddled and comforted. Staff clearly knew children and parents well, and there was an ethos of respect throughout the nursery. Staff valued parents as partners in their child's care and learning and were continuously reviewing ways to communicate with parents and increase their involvement in the service.

There were some opportunities for children to make choices and their views were valued, although the programme was a little adult directed at times. Planning within the rooms took account of the interests and stages of the children, and we discussed ways that staff could further develop responsive planning and a more child led approach to play and learning. Improved understanding of key childcare frameworks could help staff to extend breadth and depth to children's experiences, better supporting all children to reach potential. See recommendation one.

Children in all rooms were encouraged to be independent and we saw 1-2 year old children confidently feeding themselves and requiring minimal assistance from staff, they also tidied away resources. Older children participated in all aspects of preparation for mealtimes, including setting the table and serving themselves. They confidently carried out tasks and were given time and support to manage self-help. We saw that this boosted children's confidence and self esteem as well as supporting the development of many skills.

There were some attractive wall displays of the children's work and photographs of them at play. Staff could extend the use of mindmaps and displays of consultation with children, with greater visual awareness of their comments and ideas, that could encourage children to go back and revisit and extend learning.

We observed many positive staff interactions with the children that supported the children's learning and well-being. Staff were sensitive to children and families individual needs. We saw that staff were approachable and used praise and encouraging language with the children, that was respectful and boosted well-being and self-esteem.

Transitions were very well supported in the setting and we saw good recording and sharing of information between staff to support children and parents through change.

Children had formed good friendships with peers, they were learning to share, take turns, work together and consider the needs of others. This was supporting them to be responsible and independent.

We saw all children accessing outdoor play, but this was seen to be largely determined by staff and involved taking the whole group out at the same time. Staff should continue to explore ways to extend indoor active play and develop more spontaneous and child initiated access to outdoor play.

Children's health was well supported through nursery routines that included daily fresh air and exercise, a varied menu with emphasis on healthy eating, availability of water and fruit in the rooms at all times, toothbrushing and flexible and individual approach for those children needing rest or sleep. We discussed with staff the importance of supporting best practice guidance for sleeping babies.

Children's needs, experiences and progress were tracked in individual profiles. We discussed how the amount of recording could be reviewed and streamlined. This may allow staff to focus more on quality rather than quantity, with a view to capturing significant learning for children. Staff should also place greater focus on identifying and revisiting next steps in learning. Staff should be supported to develop a more reflective and evaluative recording style with greater emphasis on outcomes. See recommendation two.

Staff were clear on child protection procedures, and how to raise any concerns they may have. Management were also clear on their role and responsibility in protecting children and had been proactive in seeking advice and working with other agencies when required.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. Staff should develop more child-led practice that takes greater account of national guidance, providing children with more challenge and opportunity to better support them to reach potential.

National Care Standards: Early education and childcare up to the age of 16

Standard 4: Engaging with children.

Standard 5: Quality of experience.

Standard 11: Access to resources.

Standard 12: Confidence in staff.

2. Children's profiles should continue to be reviewed, with greater focus on quality observations that track significant learning and revisits next steps in learning. Staff should be supported to develop a more reflective and evaluative recording style with greater emphasis on outcomes.

National Care Standards: Early education and childcare up to the age of 16

Standard 4: Engaging with children.

Standard 5: Quality of experience.

Standard 11: Access to resources.

Standard 12: Confidence in staff.

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

From the evidence gathered during our inspection we evaluated this theme as good.

The building was safe and secure. Recent refurbishment to the nursery had resulted in a much improved and well presented environment that provided children with improved facilities. Rooms were bright, well maintained, fresh and clean. The playrooms and corridors were welcoming and had a range of displays about children's experiences and learning, including information for parents about national curriculum guidance. The displays informed parents, invited them to take part in nursery life and sought their ideas and feedback. The displays also helped children to feel included and their contributions valued in the nursery.

All children were seen to be actively engaged at play in rooms determined by their age and stage of development. They had sufficient room to play and had access to a range of age appropriate resources and activity that supported their learning and development. We noted that some new resources and equipment had been provided in all rooms, helping to improve the learning environment. We discussed the importance of staff continuing to review the environment to ensure that the children's changing needs are met. For example, the pre-school room consisted mostly of boys who played little in the home corner. We discussed ways that the resources and planning could take greater account of their interests, for example by developing a woodwork area or tinkering table. Children of ages could benefit from greater access to more natural and open-ended resources to support their learning and extend opportunities for curiosity, inquiry and creativity. See recommendation one.

There were robust risk assessments in place for all aspects of the service, including outings. These were regularly audited and continued to develop staffs understanding and response to managing risk. We discussed how the service could continue to develop their approach to risk management, supporting children to be more involved in managing risk within the service and extending opportunities for risky play.

We saw that the outside area was widely used throughout this inspection. The children were seen to be having fun and benefiting from activity in the fresh air, however, there was insufficient challenge for children, particularly those older children using the service. For example, the small plastic slide and numerous rockers were more appropriate for younger children. These resources offered little scope for older children to develop skills, explore, investigate and problem solve. We saw that children benefitted from mixed ages accessing outdoor play at the same time, with older children seen to be caring and responsible around the younger children. This supported the development of friendships and good transitions in the nursery. We discussed with staff how the outside space could be further developed through extending the range of natural materials and extend opportunities for children to develop skills and to be more creative and imaginative in their play. We suggested that staff made use of current good practice guidance including 'Our world outdoors' to inform this outdoor development. See recommendation two.

Infection control measures were seen to be good, with a generally good approach to hand washing. Children were all cared for at ground floor level, which allowed for easy access into the outside play area and a swift response to evacuating the building in an emergency situation.

There were appropriate systems in place for recording and monitoring accidents and incidents and for the administration of medication.

We discussed current guidance on the use of socket covers and the manager was keen to investigate this further and implement best practice in this area.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. Staff should continue to review room layouts and the range of resources available to extend learning opportunities and meet children's changing needs.

National Care Standard: Early education and children age of 16

Standard 5: Quality of experience.

Standard 11: Access to resources.

2. The outside play space should be further developed to offer greater challenge and opportunity.

National Care Standard: Early education and children age of 16

Standard 5: Quality of experience.

Standard 11: Access to resources.

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

From our inspection findings we evaluated this theme as good.

There was a stable and settled core staff team who knew the nursery well and worked effectively together to ensure that the nursery was well organised and met children's needs. Staff were generally cheerful and approachable and good team working was evident.

Core staff were warm, caring and nurturing in their interactions with children and they had established good relationships with children and parents. They were responsive to individual needs and respectful to children and parents, taking good account of individual views and preferences. Staff spoke to children warmly and positively, encouraging, praising and supporting them well. We saw that babies were cuddled, comforted and reassured and that they were settled and secure with staff, who understood the babies needs well. They were thoughtful in ensuring that preferred toys and comforters were available to the children to increase their level of comfort and security.

Staff told us they felt well supported by management and were confident in asking for help and support. They had good opportunities to express their views and to contribute to the development of the service. Staff received regular training in key topics, including Child Protection and First-aid, which maintained skill levels and ensured that they were up to date with latest guidance in key areas. There was a lack of team awareness of some key national frameworks, including GIRFEC and Building the ambition, which were not widely implemented in daily practice. We discussed the importance of staff developing greater understanding of key childcare frameworks to develop and strengthen their practice. This would support staff to develop a more holistic and child-led ethos and approach to children's early learning and childcare. See recommendation one.

Some staff had trained and only worked in this setting and may benefit from some visits to other childcare settings to observe and share good practice and new ideas. We discussed how this may be of help in developing the outside play area and how it is used.

Senior staff provided practical daily support to staff. There was also systems for more formal staff monitoring and annual appraisals were undertaken, these measures all supported staff development within the service. We discussed how the role of team meetings could be further evolved to support team development and planning for the service.

Robust recruitment procedures were in place, reflecting safe recruitment practices. Staff were registered with the SSSC within given timescales.

New apprentices joined the service each year and were inducted and mentored by the core staff team. Most left the service once their training was complete as there were not permanent positions for them. We saw that induction processes ensured that new staff and trainees were aware of relevant policies and procedures, including child protection. We discussed the impact of having several apprentices in post within such a small staff team, acknowledging the demands on existing staff to effectively mentor trainees. The apprentices present were capable, pleasant and had good potential to work in childcare, however, their lack of experience did impact on the quality of children's experience at times. The number of children attending was low during this inspection in the October holiday and staff to child ratios were comfortably met throughout the inspection. However, the impact of nearly half of the staff present being inexperienced apprentices may have been more significant if more children had been present. Most rooms were staffed by a qualified staff member and an apprentice or trainee on placement on the day of this inspection. The manager ensured that she was available to cover staff breaks and ensure that a qualified staff member was always present in all rooms. We asked the manager to continue to monitor the impact of the apprentice scheme on the quality of care and on the nursery's improvement agenda. See recommendation two.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. Staff development should be extended to enhance the quality of care and early learning.

National Care Standards: Early education and childcare up to the age of 16;

Standard 5: Quality of experience.

Standard 12: Confidence in staff.

2. Management should continue to monitor the impact of the apprenticeship scheme on the quality of care, the nursery's improvement agenda and outcomes for children.

National Care Standards: Early education and childcare up to the age of 16;

Standard 5: Quality of experience.

Standard 12: Confidence in staff.

Standard 13: Improving the service.

Grade: 4 - good

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

From our inspection findings we evaluated this theme as good.

The manager and her team had continued to develop quality assurance processes since the last inspection, which contributed to the ongoing improvement to the service. We found the manager to be motivated, cheerful and approachable. She had a regular presence on the nursery floor, led by good examples and was known and available to children, parents and staff. She knew the service operation very well and was able to use her 'hands on' approach informally to influence improvement and support quality assurance within the service. The nursery team had worked hard to address recommendations and areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. We saw that there had been progress in many areas and inspectors gave additional guidance to support further improvement. There was a commitment and capacity to continue to develop the service. We saw that the manager had already started to address issues raised with her during this inspection, evidencing compliance with Care Inspectorate regulation and demonstrating a willingness to work in partnership to develop the service.

We found that the nursery was generally well organised and that staff had a pride in the service, they cared about the nursery and the families attending. The service offered children, parents and staff a variety of ways in which to comment and feedback on the service.

The service had created an improvement plan, using the findings and recommendations from the last inspection to set targets. We discussed how this could be further developed, through identifying their own priorities for development and involving children, parents and staff more in the process. We discussed the importance of extending use of self assessment and developing more reflective practice, including making use of the How Good Is Our Early Learning and Child Care audit tool to measure performance. We also discussed the benefits of using key frameworks like Building the ambition to support change and fresh thinking.

We discussed the ongoing development of the quality assurance systems to further embed good practice in all areas of the service. We felt that the manager needed to review her processes and the quality of recording. We viewed some checklists that covered too much in too little detail, we felt that the recording tools needed to be more evaluative and to focus more on outcomes for children. See recommendation one.

Staff appraisals could be further developed to provide more insight into individual performance and to set and review key targets for personal development. The manager does not have an appraisal carried out for her and may benefit from this opportunity to support her personal development and enhance leadership within the service. This could be achieved through links with other managers in the nursery chain.

Overall we found the nursery to be well led by a conscientious management team, with capacity and enthusiasm for further improvement.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The service should continue to develop quality assurance systems that are effective in supporting improvement.

National Care Standards: Early education and childcare up to the age of 16

Standard 13: Improving the service.

Standard 14: Well-managed service.

Grade: 4 - good

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

Previous requirements

There are no outstanding requirements.

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

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

The staff should consider more ways to involve parents, carers and children in assessing and improving the service.

National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16.

Standard 7 - A caring environment.

Standard 9 - Involving the community.

Standard 13 - Improving the service.

This recommendation was made on 17 November 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The service had introduced a range of new ways to consult with children and parents and continued to review their systems.

Recommendation 2

The provider must provide suitable cots and mattresses for children to sleep. Cots must be placed in a suitable environment according to national best practice guidance. This will reduce the risks associated with Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

National Health Choices. Reducing the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/reducing-risk-cot-death.aspx>

Timescale - within one month of receipt of this report.

National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16.

Standard 2 - A safe environment.

Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing.

This recommendation was made on 17 November 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Cots were now set up in the baby room and were used for children that were settled in the nursery. One new child was unsettled in the cot and staff were flexible with her sleeping programme until she was more secure and settled in the nursery. Staff understood the importance of safe sleeping practice.

Recommendation 3

The staff should develop their knowledge of best practice in relation to the storage and safe administration of medication. In doing so, they will minimise risk in the service.

National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16.

Standard 2 - A safe environment.

Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing.

This recommendation was made on 17 November 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Systems for administering and managing medication had been reviewed and reflected latest Care Inspectorate guidance.

Recommendation 4

The providers should develop a robust written induction program, which allows staff to record their progress during induction periods. In doing so, the managers will be able to assess and evaluate performance offering additional guidance for staff timely.

National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16

Standard 12 - Confidence in staff.

Standard 13 - Improving the service.

Standard 14 - Well-managed service.

This recommendation was made on 17 November 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The service continued to review and develop their approach to staff induction.

Recommendation 5

The staff should develop their knowledge of current legislation and national early years frameworks. They should also implement an effective system to identify and monitor staff training and development needs.

National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16.

Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing.

Standard 12 - Confidence in staff.

This recommendation was made on 17 November 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

A further recommendation is made in this inspection report, staff were still not confident with current early years frameworks.

Recommendation 6

Staff knowledge and skills should be assessed on a regular basis to ensure they are equipped with the skills required within the setting. Additional training should be given where weaknesses are apparent. This will ensure children's needs are met within a safe environment.

National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16.

Standard 5 - Quality of experience.

Standard 12 - Confidence in staff.

This recommendation was made on 17 November 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Further staff training and development is required. This was further discussed during this inspection.

Recommendation 7

An Improvement Plan should be developed to support the staff to evaluate all aspects of care. Key areas for improvement, strategies to develop the service and details of progress should be identified within the plan.

National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16.

Standard 1 - Improving the service.

Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing.

Standard 2 - A safe environment.

Standard 12 - Confidence in staff.

This recommendation was made on 17 November 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

An improvement plan is in place and actions were being progressed.

Recommendation 8

The staff and the provider must develop communication strategies in each nursery. By sharing information about best practice and discussing strategies to avoid poor practice, the staff will be able to build on their knowledge and skills which will have a positive impact on how children's needs are met in the setting.

National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16.

Standard 1 - Improving the service.

Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing.

Standard 2 - A safe environment.

Standard 12 - Confidence in staff.

This recommendation was made on 17 November 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This is an ongoing area of work that was further discussed during this inspection.

Recommendation 9

All of the service policies should be reviewed to ensure the information supports current best practice guidance. This will provide a framework for staff and will support them to minimise risks in the settings.

National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16.

Standard 1 - Improving the service.

Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing.

Standard 2 - A safe environment.

This recommendation was made on 17 November 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

The service had either reviewed or planned to review all policies, updating where necessary to incorporate any new guidance.

Recommendation 10

The provider and the manager should develop an effective system to evaluate staff practice and performance.

National Care Standards early education and childcare up to the age of 16.

Standard 1 - Improving the service.

Standard 3 - Health and wellbeing.

Standard 2 - A safe environment.

Standard 12 - Confidence in staff.

This recommendation was made on 17 November 2015.

Action taken on previous recommendation

This is an ongoing area of work that was further discussed during this inspection. Some monitoring systems were in place that required further review.

Complaints

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

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been taken against this care service since the last inspection.

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
4 Aug 2015	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	4 - Good
		Staffing	4 - Good
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate

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