

Little Scholars (Nursery) Limited

Day Care of Children

Scholars Gate
Whitehills
East Kilbride
Glasgow
G75 9DN

Telephone: 01355 900119

Type of inspection:

Unannounced

Completed on:

18 February 2020

Service provided by:

Little Scholars (Nursery) Limited

Service provider number:

SP2004937433

Service no:

CS2003041099

About the service

Little Scholars (Nursery) Limited was registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011 to provide early learning and childcare. Conditions of registration are as follows:

To provide a care service to a maximum of 100 children. divided as follows:

28 children birth to under 2 years

21 children 2 to under 3 years

51 children 3 years to those not yet attending primary school

The service is operated by a private provider who is in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council to provide funded places for pre-school children. At the time of the inspection visit there were 132 children accessing the service with a mixture of attendance patterns.

The service is provided from a single storey building in the Whitehills area of East Kilbride. The service consists of four playrooms, sensory room, central area, toilets and a large outdoor area which is accessible from all playrooms.

The service had recently reviewed and updated their mission statement which states "Little Scholars., the place where everyone is included, respected and valued. We are dedicated to delivering the highest quality care and service to our children and families, by providing a safe and stimulating environment where play and learning go hand in hand."

We checked the service was meeting the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes and wellbeing for children by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parents to work with the services that help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of GIRFEC: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. These are also known as the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

What people told us

Over the two day inspection we observed most children to be happy and settled within their childcare setting. Children could choose from a variety of resources and activities. Older children were happy to speak with the Inspectors and tell them about their experience at nursery and their favourite activities. Comments included:

"I like playing with everything."

"I like playing with my friend best."

"My favourite is reading stories."

"I do hard work at nursery."

"I like to play with the walkie talkies."

"Going outside to play is my favourite thing to do at nursery."

"I climb trees."

"You can make things or draw."

"It's sometimes fun."

During the inspection process we seek feedback from parents who use the service via care standards questionnaires. We sent 33 questionnaires to the service to distribute to parents/carers of children who used the service, 18 of which were returned before the inspection. We also had the opportunity to speak with one parent during our visits. Feedback was mostly positive with any issues raised discussed with management. All parents stated they were happy with the quality of care their child received. Comments included:

"The nursery is wonderful and the new app is fantastic for keeping me up to date when I am working. I like to see my daughter having fun and making things. The staff have been wonderful and really care for my child." this should not mean the feedback about daily activities doesn't need to be given verbally."this should ot mean the feedback about daily activities doesn't need to be given verbally. "

"Amazing staff, so helpful and understanding. My son loves going here and has fun filled days inside and outside. He has come on with his language and motor skills leaps and bounds since joining the nursery."

"The introduction of the family app has made us feel much more included in our child's care. It lets us see the activities they are involved in, interaction with other children, learning and development. It is a great way to keep in touch with the nursery and also stay informed of our child's care."

"Our family have used Little Scholars for many years and we could not be happier with the care they have provided for or children. The nursery is lovely and the staff are outstanding."

"Little Scholars has been an enjoyable place of learning and fun for my child for the last few years. Staff are friendly and very welcoming. My child has learnt so much from the teachers and we are very happy."

"Friendly relaxed environment with kids given structure throughout the day. Great family app used to communicate with parents however this should not mean the feedback about daily activities doesn't need to be given verbally. "

"My daughter has attended Little Scholars for a few years and has loved every second of it. Every member of staff knows her well and always stop to catch up on how she is doing. My daughter has thrived both socially and educationally and is always excited to come home and share her learning and fun experiences each day."

"The nursery has a welcoming and warm ethos and great communication links with parents. The office is always open for questions and everyone tries hard to answer any queries very quickly. We are more than happy with all areas of the nursery."

"I have been using the nursery for four years and I am more than happy about the care my children receive. Over the years the use of technology/social media/communication has improved."

Self assessment

The service had not been asked to complete a self assessment in advance of this inspection. We looked at their own improvement plan which demonstrated their priorities for development and how they were monitoring the quality of the provision within the service.

From this inspection we graded this service as:

Quality of care and support	3 - Adequate
Quality of environment	3 - Adequate
Quality of staffing	3 - Adequate
Quality of management and leadership	3 - Adequate

Quality of care and support

Findings from the inspection

Children attending the service were observed to be comfortable and settled. Older children were confident and enjoyed interacting with the inspectors. Some children had developed positive friendships with their peers which helped them feel included.

Staff were caring and kind in their interactions with the children. They were aware of the new children settling and provided reassurance and comfort when needed. Staff took a respectful approach to attending to children's personal care for example asking the child if they would like their nappy changed and if they would like to go for a sleep.

Since the last inspection all staff have had access to child protection training. The manager continued to develop her knowledge by attending additional training. Staff spoke confidently about their role and responsibility in safeguarding the children in their care. They told us what action they would take, how they would record it and who they would report to if concerned about a child's health and welfare. This was a requirement at their last inspection which the service has now met.

Children in the 3 to 5 room were involved in planning/preparing their own snack menu. Photographs of a range of different foods were available for them to choose from. They now had a designated snack area outwith the main playroom which accommodated small groups of children. It was now free flow which did not interrupt the children's play and learning. The smaller groups encouraged social skills, communication and friendships. We saw this new approach to snack working well.

Although each child had a personal plan we found that the information contained within them varied immensely. Information about children's changing needs was not updated regularly, "all about me" had not been reviewed for sometime, some information was missing and next steps very limited. Many documents were not dated which made it difficult to establish when they were reviewed and updated. We also suggested changes to the progress/development report which would allow parents and children if appropriate to comment on progress made. This would ensure that parents were fully involved in their child's learning and development. (See recommendation 1)

At the last inspection we asked the service to review their arrangements for the lunch time routine and we are repeating this recommendation. During our visit the younger children sat for a very long time while staff prepared the room. Children became bored which had a negative impact on their behaviour. Older children could be encouraged to be more independent by serving themselves. This would allow them to be responsible for their own portion control. Lastly we discussed with the cook the best practice documents Food Matters and Setting the Table and where these could be found. We suggested she familiarised herself with documents and used them to review the menus and portion sizes. (See recommendation 2)

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. Information in children's personal plans should be fully completed and dated. Changes in a child's care needs, development stage, family circumstances and interests should be regularly reviewed to ensure staff have an up to date picture of the child's needs enabling the to offer the correct care and support for learning and development.

This is to ensure that care and support is in line with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: "my personal plan (sometimes referred to as a care plan) is right for me because it sets out how my needs will be met as well as my wishes and choices." (HSCS 1.15)

2. The service should review current arrangements for lunch time routine focusing on the following:

- using best practice to ensure meals are healthy, well balanced and portion controlled
- review the length of time younger children are sitting waiting for lunch
- promote children's independence for example serving themselves/pouring their own drink
- plated food should be stored appropriately while it cools
- food should be covered while being transported from kitchen to playrooms to prevent cross contamination
- water should be available to all children throughout the day.

This is to ensure that care and support is in line with the Health and Social care Standards which state: "I can choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables and participate in menu planning" and "I can drink fresh water at all times." (HSCS 1.33 & 1.39)

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of environment

Findings from the inspection

A secure entry system was in place which was monitored by staff. Visitors to the premises were asked to provide identification and sign a visitors book stating date, time and purpose of visit. These procedures helped the staff to keep the children safe.

Regular risk assessments for playrooms and outdoor area were carried out which identified any potential hazards and action taken to minimise them.

Playrooms were bright with plenty natural light. Children's photographs and artwork was displayed which helped acknowledge their achievements. Children could move freely around their rooms, playing independently or in small groups.

Although younger children could self select resources we felt choice was limited and staff missed many opportunities to extend children's learning through the use of open ended questions.(See recommendation 1) We discussed with the manager that all staff working with younger children would benefit from accessing training and revisiting the document Building the Ambition and the new document Realising the Ambition. (See recommendation 2)

In the 3-5 room children were engaged in activities they had chosen themselves including loose parts play and role playing. We could see that children had developed positive friendships with each other and enjoyed playing together. The noise level within this room was very high with children shouting at each other rather than speaking with indoor voices. We made suggestions to staff how this could be improved.

Each playroom has direct access to a large outdoor area which was well utilised especially on the second day we visited. Younger children were having fun splashing in the puddles and chasing their friends. Older children went of a bear hunt and told the Inspector all about it. These outdoor opportunities provided the children with fresh air and energetic play which is necessary for their health and wellbeing.

During our inspection we raised concerns with the manager about the services infection control procedures and how staff were implementing them. For example many children had runny noses which were not wiped, when staff did clean noses they did not always wash their hands, younger children did not wash their hands before lunch after playing all morning, nappies were not in sealed storage boxes therefore exposed to cross contamination, one changing unit was filthy and mat did not fit properly which could be a potential danger to children using it Toilet cubicles were cluttered with other items including clothes, potties, mops and buckets. Some sleep mats were burst which meant they could not be cleaned effectively. We discussed with the provider and manager the fact that the toilet door in the 2-3 room is only half a door so therefore cannot be fully closed. The provider agreed to review this. (See requirement 1)

Requirements

Number of requirements: 1

1. By 30 March 2020 and In order to ensure that the premises are fit to be used for provision of a care service the provider must ensure that robust infection control procedures are in place which staff must follow at all times. These must include the following:

- Children supervised to wash hands prior to eating food and after playing outdoors
- Staff to practice effective handwashing
- A clean apron must be worn for each child during nappy changing and removed before leaving the changing room
- Changing area within the 2-3 room should be thoroughly cleaned with nappies, potties and wipes stored appropriately in line with best practice
- Changing unit should be cleaned and the correct size of mat used
- Nappy bucket must have the lid on at all times to help keep the room free from odours

- Toilet door should be full length and closed at all times
- Sleep mats need replaced
- Mops and buckets should be stored out of the reach of the children.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the health and Social Care Standards which state: "I experience an environment that is well looked after with clean, tidy and well maintained premises, furnishings and equipment" (HSCS5.22), and in order to comply with Regulation 10(2)(b) and (d) - Fitness of premises of the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 2

1. To further extend children under 3's learning and development staff should review and extend resources to promote children's curiosity and creativity. They should also update their knowledge and skills regarding how young children learn.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state that "As a child, I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity and creativity."

2. Staff working with the under three's should access training and best practice documents Building the Ambitions and Realising the Ambition to enable them to support children's learning and development.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: "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)

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of staffing

Findings from the inspection

Since the last inspection there had been many staff changes. New staff were settling in well building relationships with children, parents and their team mates. All staff fully participated in the inspection process.

We audited four staff files and found that all necessary checks had been undertaken prior to employment commencing. This told us that staff were recruited in line with best practice Safer Recruitment through Better Recruitment. Management had developed and implemented a comprehensive induction programme which took place during the first three months of employment.

All staff were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). This is the regulatory body responsible for registering people within the social services workforce. They provide public protection by registering social service workers, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training and education and by supporting their professional development.

Most staff employed within the service had or were working towards a childcare qualification. This should ensure that they can meet the needs of the individual children in their care. Since the last inspection staff had accessed a range of training courses including Loose Parts Play, Child Protection, Autism, Numeracy and First Aid. Staff shared with the Inspectors what they had learned from the training and how they had used it in practice.

Staff were deployed appropriately with adult/child ratios adhered to at all times. This ensured that staff could respond quickly to children's requests and needs.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Grade: 3 - adequate

Quality of management and leadership

Findings from the inspection

Staff told us they felt supported by management. They were encouraged to share their ideas and involved in service improvement. Regular staff meetings took place and having recently changed the format of these management and staff feel they are now more productive.

The manager had developed and implemented a range of quality assurance systems to help her evaluate the quality of the service provided. This included a monitoring calendar, staff observations, reviewing policies and procedures and children's online journals. Although there was an audit of monthly accidents we noted this had scope for improvement to provide further details about where, who and why accident happened. The manager agreed to make these changes. (See recommendation 1)

An Improvement Plan was in place and was a working document. It set out the service priorities for development. One of these was developing and implementing a new Professional Development Review for staff. This new system takes account of staff training needs as well as the service needs and supports staff to plan personal goals. It takes place yearly with a six month follow up to monitor progress and offer support. This is still in the early stages of being rolled out to all staff therefore we cannot comment of its effectiveness. It will be reviewed at the next inspection. Another priority for the service was improving the opportunities for children to learn about numeracy. One member of staff told us she had attended a training course regarding this had had used what she had learned to extend children's knowledge and skills in this area. She felt there had been a positive impact for the children.

Parents, staff and children were involved in evaluating the service and offering ideas for improvement. Management were receptive to new ideas for developing the service and took on board any suggestions made.

The policy for how to make a complaint was displayed for parents to remind them of the procedure to follow. It contained contact details for the Care Inspectorate and South Lanarkshire Council.

Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 1

1. The management should continue to develop robust quality assurance systems which can be used to improve the outcomes for children attending the service.

This would ensure that care and support is in line with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: "I benefit from a culture of continuous improvement, with the organisation having robust and transparent quality assurance processes." (HSCS 4.19)

Grade: 3 – adequate

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

Previous requirements

Requirement 1

The provider must update child protection policy and procedures to reflect the most recent guidance and best practice. Comprehensive training should be provided to support understanding of roles and responsibilities within these procedures. This should be completed within three months of the publication of this report.

This is to ensure the service complies with the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011, 4 (1)(a) and the Health and Social Care Standards which state: I am protected from harm, neglect, abuse, bullying and exploitation by people who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. (HSCS 3.20)

This requirement was made on 14 March 2019.

Action taken on previous requirement

All staff attended child protection training night. Service now follow their local authority guidance. Manager has been on further training which she had delivered to staff. Some staff had undertaken further on-line training. Information displayed for parents, staff and visitors to read.

Met – within timescales

Requirement 2

The provider should develop a system for the management of medication based on best practice guidance.

This is to ensure the service complies with the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011, 4 (1)(a) and the Health and Social Care Standards which state: My care and support meets my needs and is right for me. (HSCS 1.19) and any treatment or intervention I receive is safe and effective (HSCS 1.12)

This requirement was made on 14 March 2019.

Action taken on previous requirement

Medication policy and paperwork has been reviewed and updated in line with best practice. We discussed a few areas for improvement during the inspection which the manager agreed to take forward.

Met - within timescales

Requirement 3

The provider should follow guidance for notifications of incidents and events that should be notified to regulatory bodies and ensure such notifications are made without delay.

This is to ensure the provider complies with the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (requirements for Care Services) Regulation 2011 No 210 Regulation 4 (1)(a) and the Health and Social Care Standards which state: I use a service and organisation that are well led and managed.(HSCS 4.23)

This requirement was made on 14 March 2019.

Action taken on previous requirement

The provider and manager are now fully aware of when they have to make notifications to the Care Inspectorate.

Met - within timescales

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

Previous recommendations

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that the service review current arrangements for lunch routine with a focus on the following:

- minimising the disruption to play and learning caused by adult led routines
- how children with additional support needs can share in mealtimes with their peers

This would ensure that care and support is in line with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: As a child, my social and physical skills, confidence, self-esteem and creativity are developed through a balance of organised and freely chosen extended play, including using open ended and natural materials (HSCS 1.31) and If I wish I can share snacks and meals alongside other people using and working in the service if appropriate. (HSCS 1.37)

This recommendation was made on 14 March 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

We feel the lunch time routines still have scope for improvement and have made a recommendation in relation to this within the body of this report.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that personal plans for individual children and planning for learning and development are reviewed to make them meaningful and useful.

Personal plans should:

- identify specific needs and concerns
- be outcome based and state the intervention/support required
- identify who is responsible for implementing and overseeing the intervention/support
- include chronologies of significant events where appropriate

Planning for learning and development should:

- focus on the learning rather than the theme
- include observations of children and the impact of experiences
- provide opportunities for staff interaction that challenges children or scaffolds learning where necessary

There should be a consistent system for recording observations and concerns regarding the development of individual children.

This would ensure that care and support is in line with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: My needs, as agreed in my personal plan, are fully met, and my wishes and choices are respected (HSCS 1.23) and , I am supported to achieve my full potential in education and employment if this is right for me. (HSCS 1.27)

This recommendation was made on 14 March 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Although the service had made some progress in relation to this recommendation we still had some concerns regarding children's personal plans therefore this recommendation has been repeated within this report.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that the service consistently apply safer recruitment procedures when recruiting staff.

This should include:

- two references from appropriate sources one of which should be from a the previous or most recent employer
- rationale for accepting a reference that indicates concerns about a workers practice
- record details of additional checks made when such a reference is given

This would ensure that practice is in line with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: I am confident that people who support and care for me have been appropriately and safely recruited.(HSCS 4.24)

This recommendation was made on 14 March 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

We sampled staff recruitment files during our inspection and found this recommendation to have been fully addressed by the service.

Recommendation 4

It is recommended that the provider reviews systems for staff appraisals and professional development. Staff appraisals should:

- begin with a review of the previous annual appraisal
- identify the needs of individual staff
- reflect the needs of the service
- identify development and learning opportunities that link to identified needs
- be periodically reviewed between annual appraisals to monitor progress

Professional development should focus on issues highlighted in this report including:

- child protection
- child development
- how children learn including schematic learning
- the role of the adult in play and learning
- sensitive interaction
- impact of adult led routines
- importance of observations
- best practice guidance
- policies and procedures as they are reviewed to ensure effective implementation

This would ensure that practice is in line with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled and are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes. (HSCS3.14)

This recommendation was made on 14 March 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Management had reviewed and developed a Professional Development Review system which they were rolling out to all staff. It took account of many of the changes requested in this recommendation. At the time of the inspection visits it was still in its early stages so we could not measure the impact. We have asked the management to continue with the system and it will be reassessed at the next inspection.

Recommendation 5

It is recommended that the provider and management team consider current best practice and research, and develop a sense of identity for the service that provides the staff team with a clear understanding of the agreed approach to practice and philosophy of the service.

This would ensure that practice is in line with the Health and Social care Standards which state: I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice. (HSCS4.11)

This recommendation was made on 14 March 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Management, staff and parents had been involved in revisiting the service aims, objectives and values. Updated versions were now in place and displayed for all to view.

Recommendation 6

it is recommended that the provider develop a systematic approach to quality assurance and monitoring and uses this information to review all policies and procedures to ensure they reflect best practice.

A quality assurance system should:

- be planned with a manageable quality assurance calendar
- be based on best practice guidance such as How Good is our Early learning and Childcare, and Building the Ambition
- identify improvement needs and good practices
- self-evaluate all aspects of practice:
- interactions (role of the adult)
- play and learning experience
- monitor management systems and tools including:
- incidents and accidents
- risk assessments
- management of medication
- maintenance and repairs

Policy and procedure reviews should include an initial focus on the following to ensure practice reflects policy:

- staff recruitment
- staff development and appraisal
- staff discipline

This would ensure that practice is in line with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled and are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes. (HSCS 3.14)

This recommendation was made on 14 March 2019.

Action taken on previous recommendation

Management had developed a quality assurance system which included a monitoring calendar , staff observations and regular audits. The service should continue developing their systems.

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
14 Mar 2019	Unannounced	Care and support 3 - Adequate Environment Not assessed Staffing 3 - Adequate Management and leadership 2 - Weak
17 Feb 2017	Unannounced	Care and support 5 - Very good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership Not assessed
16 Mar 2015	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 5 - Very good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
18 Mar 2014	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 5 - Very good Management and leadership 2 - Weak
2 Jul 2013	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 4 - Good Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
13 Oct 2010	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment Not assessed Staffing 4 - Good Management and leadership 4 - Good
31 Mar 2010	Unannounced	Care and support 4 - Good Environment 4 - Good

Date	Type	Gradings	
		Staffing	3 - Adequate
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate
10 Mar 2009	Unannounced	Care and support	4 - Good
		Environment	3 - Adequate
		Staffing	3 - Adequate
		Management and leadership	3 - Adequate

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