

# Summerlea House Nursery Day Care of Children

9 Union Street  
Largs  
KA30 8DG

Telephone: 01475 672 011

**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
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**Service provided by:**  
Childcare Scotland Properties Limited

**Service provider number:**  
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**Service no:**  
CS2019373512

## About the service

Summerlea House Nursery is one of seven Daycare of Children services provided by Childcare Scotland Properties Ltd. The service is based in the Town of Largs and works in partnership with North Ayrshire Council to provide funded early learning and childcare. The service is provided from a detached villa comprising two levels. Playrooms are located on the ground and first floor and children have access to two outdoor play areas. The service is close to a range of amenities including a beach, play park and shops.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place between 17 March 2023 and 23 March 2023. 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 registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since registration.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with several children using the service.
- Reviewed written information provided by seven families.
- Spoke with staff and management.
- Observed practice and daily life.
- Reviewed documents.
- Spoke with a visiting professional.

## Key messages

- The manager was effectively supporting improvement across all aspect of the service.
- Staff knew the children well and were nurturing and responsive.
- Children could make lots of choices about their play and learning.
- The nursery was bright, well maintained and welcoming.
- Parents were happy with the service they received.
- Quality assurance processes should continue to be developed to support the service's improvement journey.
- Planning processes should continue to be developed, particularly for children who are aged under 3 years.
- The range of toys and resources should be developed.

## 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?	4 - Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	4 - Good

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

## How good is our care, play and learning?

4 - Good

### 1.1 Nurturing care and support

We evaluated this key question as very good where significant strengths supported positive outcomes for children.

Happy, confident children were having fun in their learning in the nursery's homely, nurturing environment.

A range of information, gathered to develop personal plans, demonstrated that staff knew children well, and that children and their families were included in planning for their care and development. Personal planning processes supported individual target setting, reflecting the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators. Children's progress was evident for parents and carers to review within their plans. We discussed ways to enhance opportunities for children to recognise and celebrate their achievements. Key staff worked closely with other professionals, offering specific targeted support. This collaborative approach ensured children's individual needs were met, and that all children were supported to achieve their potential.

Staff engaged with children responsively and respectfully, for example asking them if they'd like help with personal care. Staff used kind and caring approaches, readily offering reassurance and encouragement. This helped to ensure children felt loved and valued. Children were encouraged to think about their emotions, and had pictorial prompts to help them share their feelings. One parent told us: "When dropping our child off in the morning, she places her name on a board of how she is feeling that morning and this has really helped encourage her to think what this means for her each day".

Very positive relationships between key staff and children were evident. All children knew who their key staff member was and sought them for support and to share news. All parents commented favourably about relationships and nurture. One said "I feel like every single staff member knows my child extremely well. It never matters who opens the door to us in the morning, she loves them all and they greet her with the same enthusiasm. My child would be happy to ask for help or a cuddle if needed from any member of staff".

Children enjoyed positive lunch experiences. Staff sat with children for most of the time, some eating with them, modelling good habits and creating opportunities for children to develop language and social skills. Parents commented that their children had developed the range of healthy foods that they would eat since attending the nursery. We made some suggestions for minor changes to the lunch arrangements to further enhance children's experiences.

Management and staff had a good understanding of child protection procedures. This was as a result of training that contributed to the safeguarding of children.

Medication and an audit of accidents were well managed, which helped to keep children safe and healthy.

### 1.3 Play and learning

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Staff promoted children's right to play and have fun. They supported children to develop skills in independence, make choices and lead their own learning. Children experienced good quality play and learning that was fun and met their interests. They told us about their favourite things to do, which included playing with the wooden blocks, playing outside and making things with playdough. We observed younger children playing with toys that they enjoyed and being read a story.

Staff were developing the playrooms and outdoor areas to provide children with opportunities to investigate and be creative during play. Materials such as water cardboard and wooden objects meant that children were able to develop their imagination and lead their own learning. For example, older children had lots of fun making large structures from wooden blocks and through this were developing their understanding of numbers, size and shape. Staff interacted well with children during play, providing opportunities to extend their thinking and helping them to consolidate their learning through play experiences. We did however also observe some missed opportunities to provide children with challenge that would extend their play and learning. We discussed this with management who agreed this was an ongoing improvement area. Staff joined in play in a fun way. They happily sang and played alongside them. This was helping to strengthen relationships and making learning fun. Consequently, children were having fun and enjoying their learning and development opportunities.

The staff team had developed, and was working on embedding, planning approaches that were play based, child centred and focused on children's interests and needs. This was helping to ensure that children were engaged in their play and progressing in their learning. Parents were encouraged to share information about their child's experiences and learning at home, and staff built upon that in nursery. All parents were happy with the nursery's approach to planning for children's learning. One told us 'I love how much free play they can have, I feel like everything is really their choice. They can play inside or outside in any weather and forever coming home in new clothes and needing a bath, obviously had a fun day'. Staff who worked with children aged under three years had identified potential improvements to their planning processes to provide children with experiences more suited to their stage of development. We discussed how planned staff learning in relation to schematic play, and effective observations of children will support improvement for this age range.

Children were developing links to their community through planned approaches including visits to local shops, businesses, green spaces and the beach.

## How good is our setting?

**4 - Good**

### 2.2 Children experience high quality facilities.

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The nursery was warm and welcoming for children and their families. It was well ventilated, with lots of natural light in each room, which helped create a healthy environment. Management and staff effectively monitored the secure entry system. This helped ensure children were safe and secure.

Children had a strong sense of ownership of the nursery, and clearly felt very comfortable and at home there. They enjoyed showing us round their playrooms, knew where toys and resources were and confidently accessed these to develop play in line with their chosen plans. We discussed the potential benefits of staff supporting children to make changes to play areas on a daily basis. This could help to ensure that all play environments offer excitement and appear attractive to children.

The manager and staff were continuing to develop the spaces within the nursery to provide a calm and natural environment for children. Play spaces included a range of open-ended and natural resources to stimulate children's creativity and problem solving. Cosy spaces within the playrooms were being developed, which provided space for children to rest and relax. Families told us they felt their children were offered a suitable range of play and learning activities, indoors and outdoors, to support their individual development. The nursery had recently made significant improvements to the fabric of the premises, and the range of toys and resources. However, limitations to the range and availability of resources sometimes limited children's potential to self select, and the ability for staff to provide appropriate depth and challenge to support children's play and learning. See area for improvement 1.

Children had regular daily access to outdoor play as well as opportunities to experience a variety of parks and the beach. This meant they benefitted from fresh air and active play to support their health and well-being. Children benefited from challenging and fun experiences which took account of safety. Risk assessments were in place, and they promoted a safe and well-maintained environment. Identifying ways that children could further be involved in assessing risk would further help to develop their awareness of safety.

Effective infection prevention and control measures were in place, to help keep children safe and healthy. Staff were supporting children to develop good handwashing habits, which was helping them to learn important life skills and to be safe and healthy.

## Areas for improvement

1.  
To support children's learning and development the provider should review and improve the range of resources and play equipment.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that: 'I am able to access a range of good quality equipment and furnishings to meet my needs, wishes and choices'(HSCS 5.21).

## How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well.

We made an evaluation of good for this quality indicator, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

A strong focus on improvement and capacity to improve was evident. The effective manager's early investment in building relationships with families and the staff team, resulted in strong and positive relationships, which underpinned the ongoing improvement journey. The manager led the staff team well, had a clear vision for the development of the service, and was working to involve children, parents and staff in implementing this. One parent told us: "We have every confidence in the service that is being provided by Summerlea and this is clearly being driven by strong leadership and a close knit team". Staff told us that they felt their views mattered, and that they felt involved in decision making processes. Staff were keen to develop leadership roles, which we agree will help support improvement.

The manager was promoting family involvement through a range of ways. This included the use of information technology, proactive approaches to consult and share views and the development of a parent group. These approaches were supporting a culture where everyone could confidently make suggestions for improvements, and raise issues of concern. Aspects of the service that had benefitted from family consultation included the development of the outdoor area and use of community resources. These developments enhanced children's opportunities for rich learning experiences.

The service improvement plan was underpinned by relevant local and national guidance and legislative frameworks, and was a useful tool for improvement. The plan outlined clear points for action, responsibilities and timescales. We were able to see the progress made to date in achieving these. The commitment demonstrated by the manager and staff team will support sustained improvement in outcomes for children and families.

Parents, management and staff told us about lots of recent improvements. These related in particular to the environment, communication, and approaches to meeting children's individual needs. The manager was committed to building on these further. They referred to best practice guidance and frameworks to support quality assurance processes. Staff had various levels of experiences, skills and knowledge of current best practice and theory. Some were at the early stages of becoming familiar with quality assurance frameworks and were not yet routinely involved in self-evaluation using these. We identified examples where quality assurance processes could be improved to ensure children's care and health and wellbeing is effectively supported by procedures. For example, more robust audits of personal plans would ensure next steps were consistently appropriate. We also identified that more structured observations and assessment of staff interactions and the effectiveness of spaces, using best practice guidance including 'Realising the Ambition Being Me', would help identify strengths and support improvement. See area for improvement 1.

## Areas for improvement

1. To support the ongoing improvement of the service and ensure all children consistently receive quality play and learning experiences the provider, manager and staff should continue to develop and implement effective quality assurance systems.

At a minimum, they should;

- a) ensure views are routinely sought from children, staff and parents on aspects of the service and that these views are used to inform improvement planning.
- b) further develop self-evaluation processes which include the introduction of formal systems that support reflective practice across the setting.
- c) monitor staff practice and children's play and learning experiences robustly to identify strengths and any areas for further improvement.
- d) monitor planning processes, children's personal plans and learning journals, to ensure these reflect children's current health, welfare and safety needs.

This is in order 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).

## How good is our staff team?

### 4 - Good

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, when taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Staff engaged warmly with children individually and in small groups. This helped children feel valued and loved. One parent told us: "Every single member of staff in the playroom, as well as Lauren, know our child extremely well. They are so nurturing and responsive to his needs and nothing seems like too much effort for them to do to help him".

The nursery was appropriately staffed to meet children's individual health, wellbeing and safety needs. Continuity of care and effective communication was promoted by management and staff through effective key worker arrangements. Parents told us that they knew all staff well in their child's playroom, and some throughout the nursery. Parents valued that staff spent time sharing with them, what their child was doing that day.

Staff worked well together to ensure effective supervision and good quality engagement across the day. Busy times, such as lunch periods, had been considered to minimise the impact on children's experiences. Staff breaks were carefully planned to minimise the impact on children, whilst enabling staff to refresh. This helped to ensure children benefitted from staff well-being and continuity of care. We made some minor suggestions for improvement to further support effective supervision of children and communication between staff. The manager agreed that these would have a positive impact and committed to their implementation.

Staff were happy at their work and felt well supported and valued by management. Reference to local and national best practice guidance was helping staff to develop and grow in their role, and the general development of the staff team. Staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities which in turn ensured good children's experiences. Meaningful support for staff wellbeing promoted positive attendance and meant that staff felt valued and respected.

Staff caring for children were registered with the Scottish Social Services Council. They are the regulatory body responsible for registering the social services workforce. They provide public protection by promoting high standards of conduct and practice and support the professional development of those registered with them.

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).



## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	4 - Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	4 - Good

How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good

How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good

How good is our staff team?	4 - Good
4.3 Staff deployment	4 - Good

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Care Inspectorate  
Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee  
DD1 4NY

[enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

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