

Little Learners Day Care of Children

29 Abercorn Street
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Telephone: 01418 491 658

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
9 April 2026

Service provided by:
RAM 211 Limited

Service provider number:
SP2010011260

Service no:
CS2010273088

About the service

Little Learners is registered to provide a care service for 67 children at any one time. Of the 67 children registered, no more than 18 children should be aged under two years, and no more than 25 aged between two years to under three years. There were 47 children using the service at the time of inspection.

Children are accommodated across three indoor playrooms. Children also have access to an outdoor area. The service is based in the Paisley area of Renfrewshire, next to local amenities, and public transport.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 8 and 9 April 2026. The inspection was carried out by three inspectors 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 since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- spoke with children using the service
- spoke with staff and management
- reviewed 26 completed questionnaires from staff and families
- observed practice and daily life
- reviewed documents.

As part of our inspections, we assess core assurances. Core assurances are checks we make to ensure children are safe, the physical environment is well maintained and that a service is operating legally. At the time of this inspection, no improvements were identified relating to core assurances.

As part of this inspection, we undertook a focus area. We have gathered specific information to help us understand more about how services support children's safety, wellbeing and engagement in their play and learning. This included reviewing the following aspects:

- staff deployment
- safety of the physical environment, indoors and outdoors
- the quality of personal plans and how well children's needs are being met
- children's engagement with the experiences provided in their setting.

Key messages

- Children were nurtured, engaged in high-quality experiences, and having fun.
- Staff knew children very well, responded to their needs sensitively in line with information recorded in their personal plans.
- Play and learning approaches were child centred and supported children's overall development.
- Quality assurance, self-evaluation and improvement planning had a positive impact on the outcomes for children and families.
- Families provided highly positive feedback about the service, showing positive relationships were established.
- The management team engaged positively with the inspection process, external support and partnerships to drive ongoing improvement.
- Good staff deployment meant children experienced continuity of care.

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good

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

Leadership 4 - Good

We evaluated different parts of this heading as good and very good, with an overall evaluation of good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Quality indicator: Leadership and management of staff and resources.

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

The team was well supported by a skilled and experienced management team, led by an inspirational manager who showed a strong commitment to staff wellbeing and improvement. Staff spoke positively about the support they received, which helped create a caring and collaborative ethos across the service. Leaders promoted a shared vision and had high aspirations for quality outcomes. Management shared plans to review the vision statement to ensure it reflected everyone's views and continued to support high-quality outcomes for children and families. We agreed this would be a positive step in further strengthening the shared vision statement and celebrating good practice.

Strong communication methods were in place, and the manager used these effectively to share progress on improvements and gather people's views. One example of this was consulting families about their views of the staff team. This information was analysed and used to inform a staff award and to celebrate individual staff practice during supervision sessions. We concluded that people's views were used well to recognise strengths within the service and to plan ongoing improvements. This helped people feel valued and included in the service's improvement journey.

Children's voices were important to staff. They were regularly consulted about their learning, the staff who cared for them, and ongoing improvements such as the lunch time experience. Their thoughts, voices and ideas were displayed in quotations on nursery walls alongside their artwork and achievements. This supported children's rights, helped them feel valued and ensured improvement planning was central to the needs and opinions of children.

There was a well-understood improvement plan and action plan in place, that clearly aligned with the current needs of the service. The plan was specific, targeted, and had led to observable positive changes in practice. For example, it outlined actions taken to further enhance the learning environments, making them more welcoming, enabling, and supportive of children's wellbeing, care, play, and learning needs. As a result, children benefited from high-quality early learning and childcare tailored to their individual needs and preferences.

The manager and staff team completed a wide range of quality assurance activities to support effective self evaluation and improvement planning. These included staff and management meetings, workshops, training, monitoring, auditing, self-evaluation exercises, and staff reviews. The management team engaged well with improvement support, including the Care Inspectorate improvement programme and positive partnership working with local authority links. They reflected on practice, used improvement methodology effectively, and made positive changes that improved outcomes for children, staff, and families. Examples included improvements to personal plans and staff interactions, which helped meet children's individual needs, supported continuity of care, and enabled children to feel secure, have fun, and enjoy learning.

Quality indicator: Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment.

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

Staff had access to a wide range of training, and we observed areas where this had a positive impact on outcomes for children. This included improvements to planning approaches for children's play and learning, and staff interactions. We shared with management that some training should be revisited and learning further embedded to ensure continued improvement in outcomes, particularly in relation to infection prevention and control, and creative learning.

Staff took part in regular reviews with their manager, including three-monthly supervision sessions and annual appraisals. These discussions had a strong focus on wellbeing and informed staff professional development. This supported staff to work towards shared goals that linked to the improvement plan and helped improve outcomes for children. Staff leadership and champion roles were at an early stage, with outdoor and communication champions agreed. We concluded that, with additional time and support to meet with the wider team, these roles had the potential to further strengthen practice and improve outcomes for children.

The staff team worked well together to meet children's needs and ensure children had fun at the service. All families who provided feedback were positive about the staff team and their skills. One person said, "The staff are always so lovely. They give us regular updates and speak to us about our daughter at pick up and drop off time. They are very pleasant at all times." This helped support continuity of care and built strong positive relationships between staff, children and families.

The management team understood the importance of appropriate staffing throughout the day, and planned staff breaks to minimise disruption to children. Staff supported one another well, which promoted continuity of care and positive outcomes for children. We noted some inconsistencies in staff deployment at key points, which at times affected children's choice, access to outdoor play, and opportunities for staff to speak with families. These observations were shared with management and the provider, who agreed to review the staffing model to increase flexibility. This reflective approach demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement and had the potential to further enhance staff deployment and children's experiences across the nursery day.

Staff caring for children were safely recruited and registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), the regulatory body responsible for registering the social services workforce. The SSSC promotes high standards of conduct and practice and supports the professional development of those registered. This contributed to keeping children safe.

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces **4 - Good****Quality indicator: Children experience high quality spaces.**

We evaluated this quality indicator as good, where there were important strengths within the setting's work and some aspects which could benefit from improvement.

The setting was comfortable, furnished to a high standard, and welcoming, with plenty of natural light and

ventilation through open doors and windows. Wall displays showcased children's achievements and creativity, and welcome areas provided important information for families. Soft lighting, gentle music, and natural materials contributed to a homely and peaceful atmosphere. This sent a strong message to children and families that they mattered.

Staff shaped the environment to meet children's individual needs and stages of development, providing calm spaces for rest and de-escalation alongside areas for focused, nurturing support. Children accessed a wide range of resources, including loose parts, sensory, exploratory, and imaginative play materials, which supported choice and independence. While provision was strong, a wider range of creative materials for children to self-select would further support creativity. Overall, the environment supported children to lead their own play, learning, and decision making.

All children had regular access to outdoor play throughout the day, with staff taking groups outside and responding well to most children's requests to go outdoors. Staff interacted positively with children and ensured outdoor play was inclusive and well supported. The outdoor areas were safe, and recent improvements increased opportunities for risky play, sensory experiences, and exploration, which children enjoyed.

In most instances, infection prevention and control measures supported children's health and wellbeing. The environment was kept clean, with staff thoroughly cleaning areas at mealtimes, storing personal items hygienically, and supporting children and staff to practise effective handwashing before eating and after outdoor play and toileting. However, improvements were needed to ventilation in the changing area, the organisation of the laundry room to reduce the risk of cross-contamination, and handwashing practices after mealtimes. We raised these issues with the manager and provider, who confirmed prompt action would be taken. This supported improved infection prevention and safer practice for children.

The setting provided a safe and secure environment for children. Secure fencing and a controlled entry system ensured only authorised individuals accessed the premises, and staff remained vigilant in safeguarding children throughout the day. However, the use of three different systems to account for children led to some inaccuracies and confusion on the first day of inspection, although this was resolved by day two. We suggested the service review and streamline these systems to reduce duplication, minimise confusion, and further strengthen children's safety.

The service had effective arrangements to identify, record, and report maintenance issues, which management addressed promptly. During the inspection, we identified additional maintenance needs, including a cracked fire escape window, a gate needing adjustment to operate safely, and an unsafe buggy storage. Some of these were on the manager's longer-term maintenance plan, and the provider should ensure timely completion. In addition, a facilities staff member, supported by cleaning and catering teams, helped maintain a safe and hygienic environment. We concluded this contributed positively to children's safety and wellbeing.

The use of closed-circuit television CCTV was used appropriately and in a way that respected children's dignity, with clear guidance set out in a policy. Children's personal information was stored securely and only accessed by staff who needed it, and we concluded that information was managed appropriately.

Children play and learn 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator: Playing, learning and developing.

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children engaged in a wide range of learning opportunities across the setting and were supported to make choices that led their play and learning. Overall, environments were enabling and challenging, with children given time, space, and support to develop independence, resilience, and decision-making skills. At times, adult-led experiences limited choice, particularly around access to creative materials; however, management recognised this and planned further development. This was a positive step towards strengthening children's right to play, choice, and high-quality learning experiences.

Children spent time in their local community, visiting care homes, shops, parks, the pharmacy, and the police station. Some families commented positively on children's outdoor experiences. One person said, "My child went a trip to paisley town centre to collect leaves as part of an activity there were doing at nursery. He loved this and thought he was on a big adventure even though he was just round the corner from the nursery." These experiences strengthened children's sense of belonging and enriched their play and learning.

Staff showed a strong understanding of how children learn and develop through play. They used training effectively, reflected on its impact, and adapted practice to improve outcomes for children. This included supporting schematic play, which describes the repeated actions children use to explore ideas such as movement, space, and how things work. For example, staff provided enjoyable ball play experiences and opportunities for children to explore spaces and use their imagination during play. This supported children's overall development.

Staff supported children's numeracy, literacy and language development through everyday interactions, such as singing, sharing stories, and using simple mathematical language during play and routines. This helped children build confidence in communication and early number skills.

Some staff extended children's learning well through skilful questioning. They used questions to offer choice, build on play ideas, and extend children's thinking. This supported children's interests, independence, and overall development.

A new planning approach was in place. Staff reflected on children's interests and stages of development collectively as a team and agreed plans to respond to these.

They linked their planning documentation to national curriculums and guidance. They evaluated the planning and used this to plan next steps and track children's learning and progress. We concluded planning approaches, although new and developing, were child centred and developmentally appropriate.

Staff worked together with children's families to inform them about their children's learning and development. Observations of children's play and learning were recorded, along with their achievements and successes on an online app. Parents were able to comment about the play and learning experiences.

This gave parents opportunity to continue and consolidate children's learning at home through discussion and further experiences.

Observation skills across the staff team were mixed. Most staff recorded clear evidence of children's learning and development, while others focused more on children's participation in activities. Management had already identified this through their own monitoring and planned to continue supporting staff to develop a more consistent, highly skilled approach to observation. Staff completed tracking and progress reports for each child every six months, which supported monitoring children's progress over time.

Children are supported to achieve **5 - Very Good**

Quality indicator: Nurturing care and support.

We found major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work and identified very few areas for improvement; therefore, we evaluated this quality indicator as very good.

Children received warm, caring, and nurturing support from staff, who demonstrated a strong understanding of each child's individual needs. Staff provided sensitive and respectful care, assisting with daily routines such as dressing and personal care. They took time to ask children if they needed help, always offering praise and encouragement while promoting independence. This approach helped children feel valued, nurtured, and respected, and supported their rights and overall wellbeing.

Children experienced quality mealtimes. They were able to come to a natural pause in their play to attend free-flow snack and lunch with their peers, supporting their right to play. Lunches and snacks were nutritious, and staff managed dietary and allergy needs well. Staff sat with children during meals, effectively supervising and engaging them in conversations about their day. Children confidently self-selected their drinks and some foods, which encouraged independence and social skills. The management shared that they planned to work towards full self-serving for children at lunch time. We agreed this would be a positive step to enhancing the experience. We concluded children's mealtime experiences were calm, unhurried and supportive.

All children had a personal plan based on the wellbeing indicators, developed in partnership with parents and reviewed regularly. Plans outlined children's routines, preferences and support needs, with strategies to help them reach their potential. While plans contained key information to support staff to respond sensitively to changes in children's lives, the quality of identified next steps varied. Management were monitoring this through regular audits and providing ongoing feedback to support improvement. Overall, plans contained key information to help staff respond quickly and compassionately to changes in a child's life.

A range of supports were in place for children with additional support needs, including communication passports, staged intervention plans, and individual risk assessments. Staff were familiar with these tools and described how they used them in practice, working collaboratively with families and other professionals to agree timely interventions. Visual supports, such as a recently introduced 'now and next' board, were being used with some children to support communication and transitions. This removed barriers to children's learning, and supported their wellbeing, helping them reach their full potential.

Staff had built strong, trusting relationships with families, creating an inclusive and welcoming ethos. Parents were invited into the nursery at the start and end of sessions, enabling informal conversations

about children's experiences and needs. Staff, children, and families spent quality time chatting, sharing stories from home, and celebrating children's achievements. When we asked families what they liked about the service, one person said, "I like how much families are involved. The nursery are always involving the families with taking part in events and asking for people's views on things." This contributed to a strong, nurturing, and inclusive approach that supported positive relationships and attachments. Engagement was further strengthened through stay and play sessions and a range of effective communication methods, including newsletters, and wall displays. Together, these approaches supported children's wellbeing, positive attachments, and fostered a strong sense of community between home and nursery.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

To meet children's health, welfare and safety needs, the manager and staff should develop children's personal plans. This should include, but not be limited to, identifying and implementing appropriate strategies to meet children's needs, supporting progress and helping them to achieve their full potential.

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

'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 1.1).

This area for improvement was made on 7 May 2025.

Action taken since then

All children had a personal plan based on the wellbeing indicators, developed with parents and reviewed regularly. Plans included key information about children's routines, preferences, and support needs, helping staff respond sensitively to changes in children's lives. While the quality of next steps varied, management monitored this through regular audits and provided ongoing feedback to support improvement. Overall, plans identified children's needs, detailed supportive strategies and next steps to help children to meet their full potential.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To support children to achieve their full potential the manager and staff should ensure appropriate levels of challenge in learning through child-led planning. This should include, but not be limited to, high quality observations, meaningful next steps and evidence of progression in learning.

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

'My care and support meets my needs and is right for me' (HSCS 1.19).

This area for improvement was made on 7 May 2025.

Action taken since then

Management had reviewed planning processes for children's play and learning in partnership with staff and introduced a new approach. This resulted in more effective planning for both areas of provision and individual children. Staff used mind maps well to show how children's interests and stages of development were recognised and built into planning.

Staff provided children with a range of experiences that were clearly linked to plans. They interacted purposefully with children to support and extend their learning. For example, staff used songs and stories to develop children's language skills. In addition, some staff extended learning particularly well through skilful questioning. They used questions to offer choice, build on play ideas, and encourage children to think more deeply. This supported children's interests, independence, and overall development.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To support children's health, wellbeing and choice, the manager should develop arrangements to ensure all children can choose when they access outdoors. This should include a focus on a safe area to play with more exciting and challenging outdoor play experiences.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) which state that:

'As a child, I play outdoors every day and regularly explore a natural environment' (HSCS 1.32).

This area for improvement was made on 7 May 2025.

Action taken since then

Children in all playrooms accessed outdoor play throughout the day. Staff led children outdoors in groups and there was no free flow access. Staff interacted well with children and responded positively to almost all requests to go outside. Outdoor areas were safe, and recent improvements had increased opportunities for risky play, sensory play, and curiosity. Children were observed to enjoy their time outdoors and have fun.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To support children's play and learning, management and staff should look at creating an environment that inspires children's imagination, curiosity and creativity. Also providing children with more developmentally appropriate opportunities to discover, explore, experiment and problem solve.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS) 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, learning and creativity' (HSCS 2.27).

This area for improvement was made on 7 May 2025.

Action taken since then

Staff had engaged in a range of training, self evaluation, monitoring, and reflective activities to improve their play spaces. As a result, the environment was welcoming, well organised, and thoughtfully resourced to support children to play, have fun, and make choices. Children benefited from a variety of sensory, loose part, and imaginative materials, and staff used the environment effectively to meet children's individual needs.

To build on this, strong practice, management and staff should continue to enhance the environment so that it further inspires children's creativity. Overall, the environment supported children to confidently lead their own play and learning.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

To improve the continuity of care and ensure best outcomes for children, the provider should review the current system in place to support individual children and the consistency of the staff team.

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

'I experience stability in my care and support from people who know my needs, choices and wishes, even if there are changes in the service or organisation' (HSCS 4.15); and 'I am supported and cared for by people I know so that I experience consistency and continuity' (HSCS 4.16).

This area for improvement was made on 7 May 2025.

Action taken since then

The provider had made significant changes to how staff were deployed across the service. This included ensuring that both the manager and depute were supernumerary, enabling them to lead improvements effectively and provide consistent support to staff and children. In addition, a higher proportion of experienced and qualified staff had been appointed, supporting a shared, high-quality approach across the service.

Improvements were also evident in personal planning and approaches to play and learning. Together, these developments resulted in children being cared for by a consistent staff team who knew them well and interacted skilfully to meet their individual needs. This contributed to children feeling safe, secure, and supported to have fun throughout their day.

This area for improvement has been met.

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

Leadership	4 - Good
Leadership and management of staff and resources	5 - Very Good
Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment	4 - Good
Children thrive and develop in quality spaces	4 - Good
Children experience high quality spaces	4 - Good
Children play and learn	5 - Very Good
Playing, learning and developing	5 - Very Good
Children are supported to achieve	5 - Very Good
Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good

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