Little Scholars Day Nursery
Day Care of Children

Lawers Drive
Panmurefield Village
Broughty Ferry
Dundee
DD5 3TZ

Telephone: 01382 477 555

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
21 May 2021

Service provided by:
Sword (Nursery) Limited

Service provider number:
SP2010011203

Service no:
CS2007157846

About the service

Little Scholars Day Nursery is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 78 children at any one time, of whom a maximum of 18 may be under two years, a maximum of 20 may be age two - three years and a maximum of 40 may be three years and over.

The service registered with the Care Inspectorate in April 2011.

The service provider is Sword (Nursery) Limited, a company providing similar services in Scotland. The service is situated in a largely residential area of Broughty Ferry, close to the boundary between Dundee and Angus. The service is a partner provider with Dundee City Council.

The nursery is housed in a modern, purpose-built, one storey building. The premises consist of a secured entrance area, kitchen, dedicated staff room and five playrooms with toilets and changing facilities. Each playroom has its own outdoor decked play area and there is a large fenced garden providing outdoor play areas for all children. During the last year a new outdoor area has been created at the front of the building, providing more outdoor space for the younger children.

The service aims and objectives include:

- To provide children a welcoming, safe, stimulating, inclusive and homely environment where children and their families are treated with fairness, equality and respect.
- To provide a curriculum that encompasses the needs of the individual child. Ensuring experiences are stimulating, challenging and enjoyable allowing children to reach their full potential to have dedicated and professional staff who have clear roles and responsibilities for improving the quality of experience and have an understanding of shared commitment.
- To work effectively in partnership with other centres and professionals to enrich experiences, meet individual needs and access support and guidance when necessary.
- To work in partnership with parents; being approachable, valuing parents input and sharing insights of their child's learning and development.

We carried out an unannounced on-site inspection on 18 May 2021. The inspection was completed using Teams technology on 20 May and 21 May 2021. Feedback was given on 21 May 2021.

This was a focussed inspection to evaluate how well children were being supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. We evaluated the service based on key areas that are vital to the support and wellbeing of children experiencing care during the pandemic. This inspection was carried out by two early years inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

We check services are meeting the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (also known as 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 can help them. There are eight wellbeing indicators at the heart of Getting It Right For Every Child: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.

What people told us

We spoke with children during the inspection, who shared their experiences of nursery and changed routines. They also spoke of their friendships.

We spoke with 41 parents and carers through telephone calls, emails and one parent in the grounds of the service. We discussed all comments with management.

Parent comments included:

"Our son was due to start nursery during the first lockdown. My wife and I are both keyworkers and the staff kept us up to date by email until the point they were allowed to open again. As soon as initial restrictions were eased and they were to open for keyworkers' children, we were given our new start date. One of us was allowed to attend for a pre-start visit with our son, during which the staff explained day to day nursery life along with what additional measures were being put in place to help protect the children and staff.
Once started we were asked to drop off and collect our son at the front door rather than his room. 2m marks were added to the outside path to aid queueing and there was a one way system coming in and out different gates. Staff always attended the front door wearing masks and were using hand sanitiser.
All information about the changing situation was communicated by email, which suits both myself and my wife. Our son's progress is updated on the nursery's online platform".

"The staff are great with the kids and even the ones from the different rooms know our son's name and say hello to him when they see him".

"Overall we are very happy with how the nursery have dealt with the pandemic and his care in general".

"The staff at Little scholars are fantastic and they have adapted and coped well in the what has been a difficult year. They have made the nursery still an enjoyable, caring sharing environment in which my little boy feels safe and is thriving down to their excellent teaching".

"Our child has been attending nursery throughout the time they were open during the pandemic as we are both key workers. Through this time, there has been a lot of changes to rules/guidance and the nursery have handled this very well. They have supported us by tailoring designated drop off/pick up times to suit our schedules which has been a huge help throughout a stressful time.
When the days/hours were reduced, Michelle and Jenny tried to make this suit our work schedules wherever possible".

"Although we understand that the bulk of the staff were furloughed, communication during the first lockdown could have been better. Following the nursery closure there was a lot of ambiguity regarding fees and very little communication around this. It would have caused less stress if we knew the process of how the fees would be used. We also found that there wasn't much support during this time for younger children, the packs given out were not really suitable for our son at 18 months and should have been tailored to age group".

"Michelle was very supportive when I needed a place for my child during the second lockdown. She was very flexible and accommodating. During the first lockdown there were a couple of phone calls towards the end of July from management giving very clear information on changes to routine. I also know from my child, that Michelle regularly relayed 'new rules' to the children and my child was able to articulate those rules to me showing a strong understanding. The rules seemed age appropriate for the children".

"I think staff have tried hard to provide detailed handovers at pick up time. I think they have also tried hard on making the children feel comfortable and 'normal'. My child certainly felt at ease after just day one of returning from both lockdowns".

"I think staff should try harder to update parents more regularly on children's learning and progress. I couldn't tell you anything that my child has been doing in nursery other than what she tells me she has played with. Learning journals online are only updated once a month with a generic update which is not personal to my child. I have not seen any evidence of learning from within the nursery. I think that not being in the nursery and seeing wall displays, planning sheets etc has had an impact on this. As it is my child's pre-school year I expected a little bit more".

"I think the staff have been excellent throughout. Receiving regular email updates was very good and as much as I would have expected at the time. They have planned children's return to nursery well, keeping parents informed of how this will work and what changes are being made to ensure compliance with all restrictions, and have also managed children starting the nursery as well as they could do in the circumstances. While parents can no longer go into nursery to collect children and speak to staff, the staff always take time to speak to parents outside the nursery and update us on what the children have been doing and how they have been throughout the day which is very much appreciated. There is nothing I have been unhappy with".

"We were asked to make the nursery aware of any changes to our child's routine prior to starting back after lockdown. (Child's name) has had a few wobbly days going into nursery after the lockdown and the staff have handled them brilliantly. We are encouraged to call with any worries or concerns and when (Child's name) has been particularly hysterical I've phoned without feeling any worries that I'd be bothering the staff. I'm given great updates that put my mind at rest".

"Staff have always made my little boy feel safe and welcome. He had slight anxiety going back to nursery but settled very quickly into his routine. Changes were communicated through the parents Facebook group, by email or verbally when being greeted or picking my child up".

"Staff have updated Learning Journey frequently. They have sent home a report (which described my child amazingly). I feel that these are so important as we cannot go into the nursery. They have followed guidelines making it safe for our little ones and keeping things engaging and fun for them throughout this hard time".

"The nursery have been brilliant through Covid. Keeping us up to date by email or phone calls.
They have been doing a very good job with everything. I have no issues".

"The staff at the nursery have been fantastic, my son struggled settling back in initially but they all gave him the support he needed and is now much happier and completely settled back into his routine".

"The staff arranged for at home packages to be delivered during the first lockdown which gave us plenty of ideas and activities to do while we were at home. They kept in touch to inform us of any changes via email and phone calls".

"We were informed of changes and if we had any concerns or queries to contact the nursery. I was happy with the way the changes were made as they were completely necessary for the nursery to operate safely".

"I can't fault the staff in any way, they have all dealt with a very challenging year in such a professional

manner, they have made me feel at ease and supported us throughout the year.

"Information is shared via email or the nursery Facebook page which works great for me".

"The staff are always available if I need to talk to them. They issued new 'All about me' booklets to update any changes. I'm able to provide feedback at any time".

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 and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	5 - Very Good

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

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic? 5 - Very Good

Quality indicator 5.1:
Children's health and wellbeing are supported and safeguarded during COVID-19:
- Children are nurtured and supported throughout their changed experience in their early learning and childcare setting.
- Effective communication with families enables responsive care to support children through changing circumstances.

Children were happy, relaxed, settled into the nursery environment and confident with new routines.

Settling in approaches were carried out on an individual basis, supporting children in a sensitive manner and at the child's pace. Parents who had children start at the service during the pandemic commented on staff understanding and flexibility, ensuring the children had the best start possible in the nursery. Staff were also mindful of parent support in settling children into the service in accordance with Scottish Government guidance, for example, garden visits were undertaken.

We observed attachments and relationships developing between staff and children. Babies were cuddled, comforted and reassured. Staff sat at the children's level, engaging with the children. The older children were asking questions and seeking support from staff if they wished. Staff knew children well and were very aware of children's emotions and feelings, which they supported as needed. Staff were nurturing and supportive of children's health and wellbeing, working closely with other professionals and agencies to support children's individual needs.

Children enjoyed outdoor play at all ages, with direct access from each playroom to the decking and garden area. We observed children lead their own play, with staff supporting and extending where necessary. A group of older children enjoyed using their imaginations whilst involved in loose parts play, using crates, bark and other resources as they co-operatively played together, planning amongst each other and giving instructions. We saw younger children have fun using shaving foam indoors and outside, exploring and investigating and mark making

The service had maintained contact with families even while closed during lockdown. Activity packs were made available for all children to use at home, containing a variety of tasks and activities to suit the ages of the children in the service, and their siblings. Communication methods, including the closed Facebook page, emails, newsletters and telephone calls, have ensured that information was shared regularly with parents during the pandemic. Management and staff were very aware of the need to inform and include parents at this time when access to the building is not permitted. The service continues to develop interactions between parents and staff at handover time.

Staff recorded general and individual observations of the children's learning and development at the service within their online learning journeys. These journeys were shared with parents, giving them the opportunity to share in their child's life at the service and the opportunity to give comment. Staff should ensure a mix of observations are included within each learning journey so that parents are fully aware of their child's learning and development at this time.

We observed children in three of the playrooms, sitting for longer periods around lunchtime, while staff undertook tasks. Staff should be flexible at this time, ensuring children continue to receive quality

experiences. Management had also observed this through their monitoring systems and had discussed this with staff. Children were now to play until lunch was ready and then be seated after handwashing, which allowed for them to have more free flow play opportunities and less waiting time during the lunch period.

Quality indicator 5.2:
Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff.
- Children are protected as staff take all necessary precautions to prevent the spread of infection.

Children were protected from the spread of infection as Scottish Government guidance had been implemented within the service, providing all the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of infection. Clear risk assessments, policies and procedures were in place to ensure a consistent approach to infection prevention and control and safe staff working practice.

The nursery environment was observed to be clean and well maintained. Good ventilation was maintained throughout the building with windows and doors open, including in playrooms. Staff maintained a safe distance from each other, wearing masks in communal areas and when greeting parents at the main door. Parents remained at the front door during drop off and collection times limiting the adult contact within the service in accordance with Scottish Government guidance. Staff told us that they had undertaken infection control training incorporating Covid-19 and were to carry out a refresher in coming weeks to ensure their knowledge and practice remained current.

Each playroom was a cohort of children with staff not mixing between rooms, therefore limiting the risk of infection spread. We observed robust handwashing taking place by all staff and children regularly throughout the session. Children were familiar with the routine of handwashing, with staff reminding and supporting as needed. Fun ways had been introduced to support children with their new routines, such as, singing and discussion.

Children's toys and resources were thoroughly cleaned after use, with no sharing of resources and equipment between playrooms during the session. Enhanced cleaning was carried out throughout the nursery every two hours, with staff and management taking responsibility to ensure all necessary procedures and tasks were undertaken and recorded. A regular deep clean of the service was carried out, with carpet cleaning to ensure the service was thoroughly cleaned, minimising the spread of infection and keeping children and staff safe and protected.

Management and staff had a good understanding of the signs/symptoms should a child become unwell whilst at the nursery. A procedure was in place, which had been shared with parents to support and isolate any child displaying symptoms until they were collected from the service.

Quality indicator 5.3:
Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19:
- Staffing arrangements meet the needs of children and families.
- Staff are well supported and confident.

Management ensured staff were deployed effectively throughout the nursery providing consistency for children whilst abiding by Scottish Government guidance. Staff skills and experience were considered when deploying staff to ensure maximum support for individual children and scaffolding of learning.

Staff were motivated and enthusiastic. They talked confidently about changes to routines and practice and the minimal impact on children. Staff we talked with were clear about their roles and responsibilities and discussed how they supported children with routines and learning experiences. Staff told us they worked

well as a team, sharing ideas, voicing opinions and suggestions to develop the service. Staff told us they were happy coming to work, all mitigations were in place and they enjoyed working with the children and families.

The staff had undertaken infection prevention and control training and had undertaken specific training in relation to Covid-19 on their return to working in the service. This training was to be refreshed in the coming weeks to ensure knowledge and practice was current. Our observations of staff practice and discussions with them reassured us that staff were confident in current legislation and best practice. This ensured they maintained a healthy environment for children and families. Staff had also been involved in various training opportunities online and through reading materials during the pandemic to enhance their knowledge, skills and practice. This learning was reflected upon to ensure positive outcomes for children.

Staff were well supported by management. They talked of changes within the service being well managed and being consulted on these changes. Staff talked highly of management and the support they received professionally and personally during the pandemic. The manager was very aware of staff health and wellbeing. She provided opportunities, formally and informally, for staff to discuss any stresses, anxieties or concerns they had.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care and support during the COVID-19 pandemic?	5 - Very Good
5.1 Children's health and well being are supported and safeguarded during COVID-19	5 - Very Good
5.2 Infection prevention and control practices support a safe environment for children and staff	5 - Very Good
5.3 Staffing arrangements are responsive to the changing needs of children during COVID-19	5 - Very Good

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