High Flyers @ the Church
Day Care of Children

7 Cairns Road
Cambuslang
Glasgow
G72 8PX

Telephone: 01416415151

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
20 September 2023

Service provided by:
High Flyers Childcare Limited

Service provider number:
SP2016012672

Service no:
CS2023000154

About the service

High Flyers @ the Church is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 54 children not yet attending primary school at any one time. The service is in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council to provide early learning and childcare to children aged between three and five years.

The nursery operates from a refurbished church in the Cambuslang area of South Lanarkshire. It is located close to local amenities including parks, shops and schools. The listed building provides children with a bright, welcoming environment. The accommodation consists of three playrooms, toilets, changing areas, kitchen and cloakroom. Children attending the nursery have access to a large outdoor area which offers them the opportunity for active play and fresh air.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Tuesday September 2023 between 08:30 and 17:30. We concluded the inspection on Wednesday 20 September 2023 when we gave inspection feedback to the service provider and manager. The inspection was carried out by one inspector 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 throughout the inspection year.

In making our evaluations of the service we:

- Spoke with children within each playroom. We also reviewed survey responses from nine parents.
- Spoke with the service manager and six staff. We also reviewed survey responses from two staff.
- Observed practice and staff interactions with children.
- Reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children were cared for spoken to and listened to by staff, in ways that encouraged them to feel valued and included.
- The service should continue to embed the new format of children's personal plans, ensuring children enjoy appropriate support for their care, learning, development, and progress.
- Children were engaged in play and leading their learning. The provision of natural resources and open ended materials stimulated children's imagination and curiosity.
- More robust monitoring systems will ensure consistency in the quality of written records and contribute to sustained improvement across the setting.
- Children benefitted from a staff team who worked well together and had created a welcoming, inclusive environment.

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

We evaluated this key question as good where several strengths impacted positively on outcomes for children and clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

Quality Indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support
Children within each playroom were happy and settled. Children were treated with warmth by nurturing staff, which supported their emotional wellbeing and the development of relationships. Keyworker groups helped children form attachments with a trusted adult and to feel safe and secure within the setting. Staff conversations with parents at children's drop off and pick up times were friendly and respectful. This made it more likely that parents would feel comfortable to share information about their child with staff or raise any concerns about their care. Parents strongly agreed that staff knew their child well, including what they liked and what was important for their care. Parents' comments about support for their children included, "Staff are always smiling, happy and full of information about my child's day at nursery. It's like a home from home."

Staff spoke knowledgeably with and about children and were aware of their individual preferences and unique personalities. Responsive care and chatting about their family life and outside interests contributed positively to children's self esteem. Staff gathered information about children within the different parts of their personal plans, which helped them support children's individual needs and track their learning and development. Signposts between the different documents helped give a holistic picture of each child and how their next steps would be supported by staff. We acknowledged that there was a new format for care plans which was at an early stage of implementation. One parent had commented that they would like, "More consistent updates on the app." We agreed with the manager that it would be helpful to monitor how staff were using the new format, to ensure consistency and identify where staff may need additional support.

There were effective arrangements to make sure all staff, including the cook, knew about children's dietary needs and allergies. Procedures for the safe storage and administration of children's medication were in place to support children's health and safety. We highlighted the need to; (a) amend the medication consent form to explicitly state the route for medication administration and (b) to review how they stored children's emergency medication to make it easier for staff to quickly access if needed to support a child's health and wellbeing. Both points had been addressed appropriately before we concluded our inspection.

Children were safe and protected from harm due to the clear child protection systems that the setting had in place. Staff confirmed they had participated in training about safeguarding and demonstrated a very good understanding of links with other policy, such as whistleblowing policy. It was good practice that staff were aware that Scottish Government had recently updated national guidance on child protection and their related responsibilities. Staff had been using the key messages from the Care Inspectorate's safety campaign, 'Keeping Children Safe - Look, Think, Act' (SIMOA) in a meaningful way with children. This provided reassurance that staff would respond correctly if they were concerned about the welfare and wellbeing of a child.

Quality Indicator 1.3: Play and learning
Children of all ages were engaged in play activities of their choice, developing their creativity and problem solving skills. Children invited us to join in their play, showing us their favourite books, "Can you read this?"

and telling us about the activities they liked best, "I like playing in water so does he" (pointing to friend). Children were clearly used to the adults in the setting listening to them and respecting their ideas.

Staff were at an early stage of using 'in the moment' planning to help them be responsive to children's interests and offer challenge. Floor books were used by staff to demonstrate how they listened to children's views to help plan for activities that would motivate children to be curious about learning more.

Staff believed that their new approach to planning and focussed observations were more responsive to children's interests and would help them share children's learning experiences more meaningfully with parents. We sampled children's online learning journals and found that while some contained rich observations of children, the quality and depth varied. The setting's new learning journal software will further enhance this approach but will take time to embed. At feedback we discussed how monitoring systems had the potential to identify where staff might need additional support and learning to further improve their practice in meaningfully documenting their observations of children. The manager had visited a local early learning and childcare setting, who had shared their observation guidance. We agreed with the manager's plans to use this tool to develop staff understanding of observation and planning appropriate to children's individual needs and abilities. This will help ensure consistency in staff practice and ensure high quality play and learning experiences for children. It will also help staff to identify what individual children needs to learn next rather than the collective group. We have made monitoring an area for improvement under 'How good is our leadership.'

Children's opportunities to develop curricular areas were evident in the wall displays and we observed staff naturally introducing numeracy through counting and matching, for example during meal times. Staff used storytelling and familiar songs to support children's enjoyment of language in a fun way while also developing their talking and listening skills. Children's opportunities for learning through play were extended through staff making use of activities within the local community such as swimming, muay thai, forest school experiences, and balance bike activities. Active play in different environments encourages children to experiment with how they use their bodies and widen opportunities to learn through sensory and physical experiences. Parents valued the range of play and learning activities provided for their children. Their comments included, "The staff are very friendly and professional. Activities are appropriate and allow the children to learn and play."

One parent commented that, "I would like some home learning that links to what they are doing within the nursery room." The setting had offered annual 'stay and play' sessions for parents but agreed that children and families would benefit from more home links. It would provide consistency in supporting children's learning and achievements, while demonstrating that the setting valued the central role of parents as children's prime educators.

How good is our setting? 4 - Good

Quality Indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities.
We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement.

The whole setting was bright and clean with good quality child sized furniture and equipment. This gave children a clear message that they were welcome and that their comfort was important. The service provider agreed that this would be enhanced by reorganising the cloak room area so that children could easily access their coat peg and personal belongings. This would support children's independence and feeling of inclusion.

Children's safety was promoted through risk assessments for all areas and activities accessed by them, including external trips. The service provider employed a handyperson and there was an effective system for staff reporting any repairs. We could see that these were generally actioned in a timely manner. Staff had a clear understanding of measures to keep children safe, including maintaining registers of attendance. We suggested that staff had more ownership of risk assessments within the playroom, involving children as appropriate. This would give everyone responsibility for identifying everyday potential risks and help children make judgements that are relevant to them.

A strength of the setting was that each playroom was dominated by natural and open ended materials that encouraged children to develop their imagination and lead their own play. 'Loose parts' are materials with no fixed purpose that can be moved and manipulated by children as they try out their play ideas. Spaces were organised to enable children to independently access these resources, which supported their learning at their own pace. There were cosy spaces and soft furnishings, which created a homely environment where children could relax and support their emotional wellbeing. In our survey parents commented positively on the quality of the setting, for example, "It is always nice to get kept up to date on his sleep and know that he has a comfortable bed and blanket to use. I really love the imagination that children create from loose parts which is why the toys and play materials within the room are great in developing my child's creativity and imaginary development."

Children required to be accompanied by staff to access the outdoor play areas. However children had the opportunity for outdoor play throughout their day, which supported their physical development, inquisitiveness and overall wellbeing. Developing the outdoor space to support quality outdoor experiences for children was one of the service priorities within their improvement plan. Children already participated in forest school experiences in local woods and we could see that staff had used this and the philosophy of loose parts play to organise the outdoor environment. Playing in nature based environments help build children's resilience and their confidence in risk taking.

We found that the organisation of children's mealtimes could be improved. Staff had considered aspects that would make this an enjoyable experience where children were learning life skills. For example in the three to five playroom there was attractive table settings and children were encouraged to self serve their food. In each playroom children sat in social groups but staff did not routinely sit and eat with children to model expected behaviours. Practice was inconsistent between the playrooms, such as using the period after lunch for children to relax and think about how they wished to spend their afternoon. The setting was already familiar with Care Inspectorate's SIMOA safety campaign therefore we suggested that staff refer to the associated practice note 'Keeping children safe: supporting positive mealtime experiences in early learning and childcare' to support professional reflection on mealtime improvements. This will contribute to mealtimes being a nurturing and learning experience for children. We have included monitoring mealtimes under an area for improvement within 'How good is our leadership.'

How good is our leadership? 4 - Good

Quality Indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

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

This was the first inspection since the service was re-registered and some of their quality assurance systems had been put in place to reflect advice given as part of that process. For example there were systems for monitoring different aspects of the service. Consideration should now be given to how

monitoring contributes to children and families experiencing consistently positive outcomes. We have highlighted monitoring children's personal plans' content, risk assessments, children's mealtime experience, and safe recruitment in the relevant sections of this report. We discussed with management how some of the monitoring tasks, where appropriate, could be shared with senior members of staff. Delegating tasks promotes leadership at different levels, which builds on individual strengths of staff and contributes to their professional growth. (See area for improvement 1.)

Staff all felt well supported in their role by the manager and intimated they received regular feedback on their work. Their comments included, "Isla is a great manager that I can always go to if I ever have any concerns or queries. She is always supportive of her staff and is a great encourager." Staff believed they had a voice within playroom meetings and that team leaders fed their discussions into management meetings. However, as they rarely met as a whole team, we suggested that the service provider and manager consider team building activities. This will help sustain a shared vision that focuses on positive outcomes for children and families.

Self evaluation was a priority within the service improvement plan. The manager had identified national best practice guidance to aid this task including 'Realising the Ambition :Being me' and 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' The manager should continue to work with staff to identify leadership opportunities based on the service improvement priorities and self evaluation as well as their own interests. This will enable a more strategic approach to staff development and give staff a better understanding of how they can influence change.

Parents in our survey strongly agreed they were confident the service was well managed, supported by comments such as, "I am delighted with the care my child receives and how the nursery is managed" and "(The manager) is always very approachable, kind and professional. I find it very easy to communicate with her and I feel she would listen to me and act if necessary."

The manager and staff engaged well during the inspection process, providing additional evidence and taking on advice and support, which demonstrated their commitment to improvement.

Areas for improvement

1. To ensure that outcomes for children and families continuously improve, the manager and staff should ensure that effective and robust systems are in place to monitor and sustain a quality service. This will contribute to children and families experiencing consistently positive outcomes. This should include but not be limited to:

1) the content of children's personal plans
2) how risk assessments are used as a meaningful tool
3) children's mealtime experience
4) safe recruitment of staff.

This is to ensure that care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standards (HSCS), which state that: 'I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice' (HSCS 4.11).

How good is our staff team? 4 - Good

Quality Indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

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

The service provider's safe recruitment processes helped ensure children were cared for by staff who were fit to work with them. We made suggestions for minor changes to how information was recorded and these had been addressed appropriately before we concluded our inspection. We agreed with the manager's plans to use a checklist to monitor how the relevant recruitment checks had been implemented. To enable this it would be helpful if they had access to the Scottish Social Service Council's (SSSC) register for the service. SSSC is responsible for registering people who work in social services and regulating their education and training.

Having an overview of the differing experience, knowledge and skills within the staff group helped the manager effectively deploy staff across the setting, so that children were appropriately supported. New staff felt welcomed and respected members of the team. They had participated in an induction programme when they joined the service. This ensured they had access to core information needed to care for children and keep them safe. To support staff further, we signposted management to Scottish Government's national induction resource, which will help them develop the induction process to match national standards. The guidance can be found here: https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/3528/early-learning-and-childcare-national-induction-resource.pdf

The setting usually operated above the minimum staff ratios to support absence management and ensure children's individual needs were met. It was beneficial that the manager, if needed, could draw on staff cover from the provider's other services. This offered consistency in children's care. Throughout our inspection, we observed that staff were flexible and supported each other to work as a team to benefit children. Staff naturally called on each other for assistance when needed to support the wellbeing and safety of children.

Staff were motivated and keen to provide quality care for children. We observed positive interactions between staff as they supported children's care. Staff frequently referred to their work environment as a 'family', where they felt supported by each other and by management. Staff comments included, "The main strengths of our setting is that we all work really well together always giving each other a hand when it's needed, it's great so we can give the children the best care and experiences throughout the whole setting." This atmosphere of respect and mutual trust resulted in children being happy and confident about approaching staff for help, support and reassurance.

Staff photographs displayed at the setting entrance helped families get to know who would be caring for their children. In our survey, we received positive feedback from nine parents about the quality of the staff team. They all strongly agreed that they were confident that staff had the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to care for their child and support their learning. Their comments included, "The staff team are lovely skilled individuals, who care about my son. They feedback well at the end of the day and are kind in their interactions." and "Staff are very invested in the children. There are a wide range of activities and outings to keep them engaged."

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

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

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