

Scallywags Children's Nursery Loanhead Day Care of Children

10 Academy Lane
Loanhead
EH20 9RP

Telephone: 01314 402 004

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
15 February 2024

Service provided by:
Scallywags Children's Nursery
Loanhead Limited

Service provider number:
SP2015012604

Service no:
CS2015342097

About the service

Sallywags Children's Nursery, Loanhead is registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide a care service to a maximum of 80 children aged from birth years to entry to primary school age, with no more than 20 children under two years of age.

The nursery is partner provider with the local authority to provide funded places for children aged between two and entry into primary school.

The nursery comprises of three main playrooms, the use of a separate room for children to have lunch and take part in extra activities. A safe enclosed garden is available for outdoor play. The nursery is close to local amenities and bus and train links into Edinburgh.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on Monday 12 February 2024 between the hours of 09:15 and 15:45 and on Tuesday 13 February 2024 between the hours of 10:15 and 13:15. 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 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 10 children using the service and we received written feedback from 23 families
- spoke with the provider, manager, depute manager and staff on duty
- observed practice and daily routines
- reviewed documents
- spoke with a visiting professional.

We gave our inspection feedback to the provider and management on Thursday 15 February 2024 between the hours of 10:30 and 11:30.

Key messages

- Children experienced nurturing and caring interactions from staff.
- Children's right to play was promoted as they led their learning.
- Children were supported to reach their potential at a pace that was right for them as staff worked with their families.
- Children made progress in literacy and emotional wellbeing through creative and engaging play experiences.
- Staff engaged in regular self-evaluation for improvement to ensure they continued to provide high quality learning.
- Staff showed commitment to continuous professional development to support positive outcomes for children and families.

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?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

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

How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Children and families experienced warm and nurturing care and support from a committed nursery team. Staff were kind and caring when interacting with children and knew their individual needs and preferences. As a result, children were happy and engaged and their routines were professionally managed. One parent told us "Staff are excellent, they're so responsive and they really listen and honour our routines and needs".

Personal plans were in place and updated regularly by staff and parents to ensure the wellbeing needs of all children were met. Detailed care plans were also in place for children. Meetings around the child and staff meeting ensured the principles of "Getting it right for every child" were followed. This meant everyone was clear about their role and responsibilities to support children to make progress at a pace that was right for them. One parent told us "Staff at all levels go over and above to support my child, always ensuring their best interests are at heart".

The service had established a rich mealtime experience that promoted children's independence and encouraged them to eat well. We observed this routine to be a time for children and staff to connect over food and enjoy each other's company. This experience promoted engaging conversations, supported children to develop confidence and independence. Mealtimes were well planned, unhurried, and relaxed. Children ate in their own playroom. Staff continued to reflect and evaluate the experience to ensure children continued to have the opportunities to develop independence and life skills. For example, staff introduced a rolling snack programme and allowed children to have their snack at a time that suited them. Younger children's needs were well supported by staff and together snack times were appropriate for some.

The service had systems in place for the administration, monitoring, and storage of children's medication. This offered assurance that the healthcare needs of all children were met. One parent told us staff "have a wonderful understanding of how to support my child".

Sleep times were well monitored by staff. They had attended Safe Sleep training which empowered them to ensure children were safe. One parent told us "My child is safe and happy which makes me feel at ease leaving them in their care". Another told us their child "still naps and their needs are met well and supported by staff".

Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

Children were actively leading their play and learning through a balance of planned and freely chosen activities. They talked confidently about their learning. This was documented by children and staff in learning journeys, a wide selection of floor books and in children's personal learning books. Children were eager to show us their books which told us children felt empowered by their learning. A Family App was used by staff to share information with parents. One parent told us "They update the Family app religiously, so you know what your child is up to. I trust them wholeheartedly with my children and believe the staff have played such a huge part in their development".

Staff used children's interests and ideas to extend learning through quality observations and meaningful interactions. Staff engaged with children at their chosen activities and used the opportunities to capture what children wanted to learn. This meant children's voice was recorded and their right to play and learn was valued. One parent told us "Planning is always extensive and well communicated with parental input always encouraged and if given is acted upon".

Play experiences were high quality and supported children to engage in sustained learning. Staff supported this through quality interactions at the child's level, use of effective questioning and showed a genuine interest in children's play. This was evident in the older children's home corner which children took control of repurposing. For example, to a hairdressers.

Indoor and outdoor spaces offered children well-resourced core play provision. Staff had been creative in their approach that offered children well-structured and inviting spaces to play, explore, and investigate. Children were able to experiment and learn about cause and effect, for example, when making their own playdough and using different mediums to get creative and use imagination. They were learning to estimate, problem solve and predict what would happen. This meant that children were challenged in play that deepened their learning and sustained their engagement.

Staff were aware of younger children's schemas. and could tell us how they contributed to a child's development. A training session is planned to deepen their knowledge and understanding of how repeated actions or behaviours children had when they explore the world around them.

Children benefitted from daily fresh air and exercise in the safe garden and walks in the local community. Staff were enthusiastic and committed to the benefits learning outdoors had on a child's development and wellbeing. Several children chose to spend a sustained amount of time playing in the garden as free flow outdoor play was encouraged. An ECO Garden offered children freedom to explore and experiment with natural resources. Staff valued these experiences as an important part of the planned learning offered. This meant children developed a strong connection with the world around them. One child told us "I like the people who work there, going for walks, making snacks, and the family tree with our photos. I like that daddy got to spend time at nursery". One parent told us "Love that my child gets lots of outdoor play".

Staff ensured children experienced rich numeracy and literacy opportunities indoors and outdoors. This was evidenced by a range of resources including, numbered hopscotch, name cards, games and books. One parent told us "The play always has an educational element with numbers and language already being in mind even at the age of two". Print was displayed around play spaces, good quality books, inviting areas and a very good number of loose parts materials which allow children to create their ideas. The introduction of the Book Club allowed children to explore their feelings through stories and pictures and parents engaged in reading stories at home. High-quality play experiences and a creative use of resources meant children were supported to develop skills in fun and meaningful ways.

How good is our setting?

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 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children benefitted from the use of four playrooms and direct access to an enclosed garden.

The playrooms offered children play spaces that were calm, well structured, and met their stages of development. This gave a strong message that children mattered.

The setting was homely, comfortable, and furnished to a good standard. Children's wellbeing was promoted through lots of natural light, ventilation and ample space to move around freely. One parent told us the nursery was a "friendly, relaxed and caring environment". Children helped staff to carry out risk assessments of play spaces. This supported them to develop an understanding of risks and how to manage these in their play. As a result, children were developing important life skills in meaningful ways.

Staff were very confident in their practice in promoting effective infection, prevention and control practice to ensure children's health and wellbeing. Hand hygiene routines were embedded and cleaning of areas before children ate were robust.

Staff included children when environmental reviews were done. They took time to reflect on the appropriateness of spaces which met children's holistic needs. Management agreed to further develop the outdoor space. We shared the document "Growing My Potential" and directed staff to the range of outdoor resources on our web site.

The setting had a system in place for reporting the maintenance of the provision. Boundary fencing in the garden, codes and high handles on doors and effective staff deployment meant children's safety was promoted.

How good is our leadership?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvements are led well

Children and families experienced a welcoming, warm, and inclusive ethos that valued them as partners. Management and staff promoted a shared vision for the nursery that provided a safe, caring, supportive learning environment that inspired learning through quality play. This ensured positive outcomes for children. One parent commented they liked that "the manager and depute manager often come out and chat with parents during pick up, this makes them very approachable for anything I have needed". Another commented "I think the leadership of the nursery is clear and I feel that the leadership are visible, approachable and communicate well with parents".

Management had worked hard to ensure purposeful quality assurance and improvement planning systems were in place. A Midlothian Council teacher provided support which was welcomed by management and staff. Staff were given opportunities to reflect and engage in conversations around any changes. Play and learning and nurturing care and support were detailed priorities and staff had worked hard to embrace developments. Monitoring and self-evaluations processes were embedded throughout the nursery to promote positive outcomes for children.

Staff were clear about their role and expectations. The manager promoted leadership opportunities at all levels, for example room supervisors. This meant staff were invested in driving forward improvements through rich experiences for children and families. Staff appraisals with management were planned.

Families were welcomed into the service. They were consulted on many aspects of nursery life and their views were recorded and used to evaluate the service. For example, snack menu, fund raising charities, stay and play sessions and parents working group. Staff told us "We have good relationships with parents through regular communication and parent's night and a nursery picnic every summer". This helped to promote positive outcomes for children and their families.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for children, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

The deployment of staff was well managed and effectively met children's needs. Staff worked very well together and ensured children were able to follow their interests and access the full provision. Parents described the team as friendly, caring, and inspiring and ensured a "safe space for their children to play, learn and grow". This meant children and families benefitted from strong partnerships that supported children to thrive and flourish.

Staff skills, knowledge and interests complimented one another and resulted in quality experiences for children. Staff told us "We have a strong team and we are friendly". Another told us "All staff are easy to work with". As a result, we saw staff were happy and felt valued in their role.

Staff demonstrated commitment to their professional learning through training, reading best practice guidance and having a strong connection with each other. This included safe sleep practice. Staff were given time to reflect on training and talk about the positive impact this had on outcomes for children. As a result, children benefitted from a team that showed commitment to ensure children made progress through rich and creative play and learning. One parent told us "Staff are extremely friendly. They are brilliant at keeping you informed with everything that is going on in the nursery. I feel like they genuinely care about my child's well-being and development".

There was consistent and effective approach to communication between staff in each playroom. Regular team meetings provided opportunities for staff to come together and discuss practice. Staff planned together for a breadth of experiences and doing this created opportunities for staff to reflect on meeting the needs of every child.

Staff worked effectively as a team as their skills, commitment and understanding of quality engagement promoted children's learning and fun. Staff sat with children and supported their learning where they chose to play. As a result, children experienced quality interactions that gave a strong message that they mattered.

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 enable children the opportunity to increase their independence and learn good social skills associated with mealtimes, we recommend that the service review the snack procedure and consider how this is provided.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 6 July 2017.

Action taken since then

Staff sitting with children and supporting but allowing age appropriate independence. Snack and lunch time procedures had been reviewed and rolling snacks had been introduced.

Parents and children asked for snack preferences. This included mind mapping and drawings. Parents were consulted on food provision and suggestions taken on board.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 2

To ensure children are supported to brush their teeth properly, we recommend the service contact the dental hygienist to source training for staff on toothbrushing.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16: Standard 2: A Safe Environment. Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 6 July 2017.

Action taken since then

The older children brushed their teeth after lunch. We saw staff were knowledgeable supported children to brush their teeth properly. Children were familiar with toothbrushing routine.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 3

To ensure babies safety when sleeping, we recommend the service refer to the "Scottish Death Trust; Reduce the Risk of Cot Death; Early Years Safe Sleeping guide". Further information can be found at www.hub.careinspectorate.com

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 2: A Safe Environment. Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 6 July 2017.

Action taken since then

All staff were knowledgeable about children's safety while sleeping. They had attended Safe Sleep training.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 4

To give children the opportunity to explore the natural environment and participate in a wide range of activities that will support a healthy lifestyle, we recommend children can access the outdoors freely on a daily basis.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 - Standard 2: A Safe Environment.
Standard 3: Health and Wellbeing.

This area for improvement was made on 6 July 2017.

Action taken since then

All ages of children had access to fresh air and the outdoors on a daily basis. Free flow outdoors play in Super Scallys met the needs of some children as they preferred to play outdoors for a sustained amount of time.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 5

To ensure the service are robust in reviewing all areas of the nursery, we recommend formal auditing or monitoring records are kept of these.

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 -
Standard: 14 Well managed service.
Standard 11: Improving the Service.

This area for improvement was made on 6 July 2017.

Action taken since then

Robust monitoring, quality assurance and self evaluation took place. Quality assurance calendar evidenced what monitoring had taken place. Management and room supervisors conducted monthly environmental reviews. Formal auditing in place and embedded.

This area for improvement has been met.

Previous area for improvement 6

In order for children in the pre school room to experience and choose from programmes that are planned, designed, evaluated and put into practice by staff, we recommend staff are supported to deliver the "Curriculum for Excellence".

National Care Standards Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 -
Standard 5: Quality Of Experience
Standard: 14 Well Managed Service

This area for improvement was made on 6 July 2017.

Action taken since then

We found effective planning in each playroom. The planning was responsive and took into account children's developmental needs. We found effective use of Family App, floor books and mind mapping promoted children's voice. Management were involved on a working group with Midlothian Council focus on planning for children under three years of age. Staff were proud to show us their planning. Emphasising children are at the centre of everything we do.

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

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	4 - Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	4 - Good
How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	5 - Very Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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