



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru  
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

# Childcare Inspection Report on

**Little Scholars Nursery**

**The Centre for Child, Family & Society  
Glyndwr University  
Mold Road  
Wrexham  
LL11 2AW**



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## **Description of the service**

Little Scholars Nursery is part of Active Childcare Ltd, Wrexham, and is situated on the Glyndwr University Campus and is part of The Centre for Child, Family and Society Building which provides child observation facilities for research purposes. The responsible individual is Peter Graham. Rebecca Mottram and Catrin Davies are the nursery managers. The service is open from 07:30 – 18:00 Monday to Friday, closing for bank holidays and Christmas. Places are offered for children from 0 to 5 years and for children as part of early entitlement. The service is registered for 91 children with English being the main language and Welsh promoted.

## **Summary of our findings**

### **1. Overall assessment**

Children are flourishing. The indoor environment offers wide ranging opportunities for children to be creative and reflective. The outdoor environment stimulates children to be active and curious learners. Staff are qualified, know the children well and cater for their individual needs exceptionally well. The environment is safe, secure and welcoming with children receiving care in child centred rooms suitable for their age and stage of development. Leaders fully understand their service and care offered. Children with additional needs are welcomed and well provided for. There are established partnerships with parents, the local community and agencies.

### **2. Improvements**

Since the last inspection 8 staff have completed their Child Care Learning and Development Advanced Practice Level 5. The level 5 food hygiene and re-validation of healthy small work place has been maintained. The service have extended community partnerships by holding parent coffee mornings on Saturdays for Macmillan. Leaders have held a literacy event for parents to support literacy at home. They have organised and participated in a concept development course to support the revised foundation phase framework and built on staff knowledge and practice of concept development.

### **3. Requirements and recommendations**

No requirements.

The service did not comply with the regulations in relation to fire safety by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals.

We made recommendations in relation to staff consistently following the correct procedure for handling food, and staff movements throughout the service for relief, and or, assistance cover is recorded in the daily registers. Policies and procedures must be amended to remove named inspectors.

# **1. Well-being**

## **Summary**

Children speak and express themselves well throughout the session. They communicate their needs confidently in a variety of ways and know they are listened to. Their opinions are taken into account and influence the care they receive. Children are flourishing; they have bonds of affection with their keyworker and staff; as a result they are comfortable, settled and relaxed. Children interact and co-operate positively with their friends. They are highly motivated and engaged in their play and learning.

## **Our findings**

### **1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?**

Children communicate their needs and requests with confidence.

We found children were able to freely move around the indoor and outdoor environments.

We saw children choosing to play alone, with their friends in small groups or alongside a member of staff. Outside children were freely exploring the areas looking for butterflies, bumble bees and bugs. They had a chat about how big the vegetables had grown and were delighted that they could soon be eating them. We saw other children choosing to play an adult led game or playing on the equipment such as trikes bikes.

Children are able to express themselves and most are confident when speaking to adults and visitors. They were keen to engage with us, for example by happily showing us around their outdoor play areas and suggesting we play a game of snap indoors.

Children showed their enjoyment when their verbal and non verbal ideas were effectively listened and responded to, for example one child choosing to sit fully dressed in the water pool as the children washed the dolls. Other children requested, with good manners if they could play the movement cube game. This helped to develop their physical skills and co-ordination.

Children are listened to and provided with responsive care which enables them to communicate clearly, develop and grow with confidence.

### **1.2 To what extent do children feel safe, happy and valued?**

Children are flourishing, they have bonds of affection with their keyworker and staff who they know will help and support them to develop their self- confidence and abilities.

Children had formed friendships with others and we saw them arriving at the beginning of the day being excited to be with their friends. They were comfortable and routines were embedded providing a sense of security. For example, at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions, children happily set out some of the toys and equipment. Without being asked they calmly moved to the floor area where the register was taken. When it was time for snack after free play the children knew to get ready to take their turns to wash their hands. Children felt valued because their feelings, likes and dislikes were taken into consideration. For example, some children chose to continue with their play and have snack later. We heard a child being asked if they wanted to sleep in the 'daylight' near their keyworker rather than the sleep room which was dimly lit. We saw the children waking in a relaxed calm manner in accordance with their own sleep routines. Those who wanted a cuddle or to sit, indicated they wanted to sit on a staff members knee did so. Before too long they were refreshed and ready to get on with their day.

We saw that children's transitions through the service were seamless due to the layout and unique design of the premises. There were clear links and planning of activities between the various areas helping the children to feel happy and confident. We saw positive attachments across the service. Children told us 'the adults were nice and they liked coming to nursery'.

Children are provided with care which values their needs and requests helping to sustain positive well being.

### **1.3 How well do children interact?**

Children are learning about their own feelings and those of others to help them manage their behaviour and interact well.

Children interacted positively with their friends, the staff and us. We saw children playing alongside each other taking turns and sharing. During outdoor play we saw how children shared trikes and scooters to journey around the environment stopping to look at the various activities their friends were engaged in. We heard them planning what they might do next. Children were learning the differences between right and wrong and were encouraged to be kind to each other. We saw children bringing each other animal figures as they waited patiently to be measured on the animal chart. They told us about the 5 rules of fairness and knew how to respect each others feelings. Children are being provided with support to help them develop an understanding about the emotions of others to be able to interact positively.

### **1.4 To what extent do children enjoy their play and learning?**

Children are highly motivated, and curious to learn and play.

Children were happily choosing activities of interest to them. They played for a lot of the time in the outdoor areas which were equally equipped with inspiring adult led activities and challenging experiences. A group of mobile babies explored their secure and well designed garden area, building up skills through an excellent range of play opportunities which were available. We observed the toddlers being read a story and joining in with the story line.

Older children were happy to speak to us about what they were doing and liked to play on the large equipment, roll down the grassy banks explore the nature trail or just relax in the quiet areas. Children were learning and developing their knowledge about their natural world around them. We found them to be connected to their surroundings, for example, one child led us to the forest trail and pointed out various animals depicted. Their favourite animal being the fox, a flutter of butterflies landed on the plants nearby and the child was helped to describe the life cycle assisted by a staff member. There were more than sufficient resources to support and extend children's learning and to keep the children happy and occupied.

Children enjoy their play and learning as they are able to explore their environment and choose activities of interest to them.

### **1.5 How well do children develop, learn and become independent?**

Children make good progress, are confident to try new things and gain a sense of pride in their achievements.

Children were able to attempt to do things for themselves and develop new skills. They could easily access resources they wanted as they were stored effectively. Children were encouraged to be independent throughout the day, for example by tidying up their toys, identifying their own name on their sun cream, and remembering what their own sun hats looked like. We saw children independently visiting the bathroom, washing their hands and helping themselves to fresh water from the indoor or outdoor water fountain. During snack time children helped themselves to fruit and poured their own drinks.

All children make good progress, we heard staff supporting and promoting their independence by offering learning experiences that successfully engaged the children. For example children had excellent opportunities to learn about their environment by growing fruit, flowers and vegetables in the garden. We saw children observing the wildlife and heard them having conversations about the bird might be thirsty in the hot weather and the worms can't dig because the ground was dry, they discussed what they could do about this and independently fetched a little water to splash on the ground.

Children are provided with care which stimulates their senses and helps them to develop their play and learning and gain confidence.

## **2. Care and Development**

### **Summary**

Staff are calm and kind and have a sense of fun in their interactions with children. They keep children safe and promote a healthy lifestyle by ensuring they follow policies and procedures for the service. Interactions are managed well and staff encourage and support children to positively communicate with each other. However, some attention is needed to ensure that all staff follow the service's policies in relation to handling food and following daily risk assessments.

### **Our findings**

#### **2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?**

Overall staff have a good understanding of policies and procedures in place at the service which keep children safe and promote healthy lifestyles.

We saw staff working as a team across all areas of the service, ensuring children's needs were promoted and safeguarded. The service successfully fosters an interest in healthy eating and considers how they can achieve this through activity planning and by taking into account the variety of dietary needs. The service follows the Tiny Tums initiative and offers a varied and interesting menu, some of the fresh fruit vegetables and salad had actually been grown by the children. Children showed us around this area and were clearly excited that the beans had grown so rapidly. We heard children being encouraged to make healthy choices such as to try new fruits and drink more water. Children knew they needed to have their sunscreen applied regularly throughout the day and to wear their sun hats. This demonstrated that staff had an awareness of the risks posed by hot sunny days. There was adequate shade for outdoor focused activities as physical play was given a high priority with free flow access to the secure outdoor areas. We saw additional photographic evidence that this is encouraged all year round.

We observed a staff member serving food to children with bare hands and recommended that this practice is brought to their attention by leaders and safe food handling is followed at all times. Since this inspection the responsible individual confirmed to us that all staff have been reminded of the procedure to follow.

When asked, staff confidently told us about safeguarding procedures and described how this underpinned their daily practice. They gave a good outline of what they would do if they had a concern in relation to a child protection issue. They had attended courses to update their First Aid awareness, Safeguarding and Food Handling. Staff responded well to the individual needs of the children. Children with additional and complex medical needs are welcomed and catered for exceptionally well and they make good progress.



Children are kept safe and their physical health is promoted.

## **2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?**

Staff manage interactions extremely well.

Staff used positive behaviour management strategies and supported children to develop appropriate interactions with their friends. Throughout the whole inspection day, we heard staff using calm, clear and gentle tones when talking to children. We saw that circle time and registration focussed on promoting acceptable behaviour. The children settled quickly during these quieter times knowing they needed to listen and respond to each other and staff in a kind and respectful way. We heard staff used encouragement and praise throughout and saw them giving additional support to children where and when it was needed to help their interactions, such as sitting alongside during group activities, or inviting a child to have a comforting cuddle or a sit on their knee. Staff smiled and showed genuine warmth and affection towards the children.

Staff are very competent, they promote positive behaviour and interactions effectively.

## **2.3 How well do practitioners promote children's play, learning and development and meet their individual needs?**

Staff support children to develop and learn exceedingly well.

We spent time in all areas of the service. Through discussions with staff, observing their practice and viewing individual children's learning and development records we found staff were unquestionably familiar with the needs and development of the children in their care. Children's play and learning and development was tracked and positively promoted from the onset of the child joining the service using information from parents about their child's individual needs. Staff had regularly recorded their observations of each child's progress and had planned appropriate engaging and innovative activities for the children linking into specific areas of learning.

We saw the rooms were set out according to the principles of the Welsh Government Foundation Phase of Play and Learning and the Birth to Three Matters curriculum. There was a good balance of child led and well planned adult led activities for the children linking into specific areas of learning. Staff showed genuine enthusiasm and a sense of fun when interacting with the children. For example, we heard staff encouraging children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills by providing a range of activities which were set out in keeping with their themed topic which was 'the jungle'. With a little help from staff children measured themselves and compared their height and size to animals. Staff were heard saying 'wow you're the same size as a chimp' or a 'baby giraffe' or a 'baby elephant'. We then saw children keenly investigating the exploration area looking through magnifying glasses, choosing books to learn where the individual animal came from and then making elephant masks to paint or draw.

We heard staff promoting the Welsh language through labelling the areas and they encouraged the children to respond to simple questions and requests. Staff were relaxed, confident and happy, they worked well as a team through out the day. For example when relief cover for staff breaks, or when 1.1 was needed with children staff appeared from other areas of the nursery, they had a clear understanding of what was required, demonstrated the knew the individual children well by providing consistent quality care. However we recommended that all staff movements such as their name and time in and out are recorded on the daily registers in each room.

Staff effectively promote children's play and learning and development and meet their individual needs.

### **3. Environment**

#### **Summary**

Leaders ensure children are cared for in an exceptionally stimulating and child centred environment which is safe, clean and secure. Resources are plentiful and suitable for the needs of the children. Children have access to equipment and activities of a superb quality indoors and outside which encourage physical activity and promote play and learning.

#### **Our findings**

##### **3.1 How well do leaders ensure the safety of the environment?**

Leaders ensure children are cared for in a safe environment and their safety is given paramount importance.

We found the entrance door was secure when we arrived and left and returned again at various times during the day. The entrance door is managed by leaders for parents and visitors whilst staff have finger print entry. All visitors are required to sign the visitor book and their identity is checked. We viewed an extensive range of records and saw there were stringent Health and Safety policies in place which had been regularly reviewed. Written risk assessments had been completed and action taken to minimise and where possible eliminate any risk posed to children's safety. Leaders told us children and staff know what to do in an emergency and regular fire drills were conducted. We viewed fire drill records which evidenced fire drills are logged and take place on average 4 times a year. We informed the responsible individual that this is not sufficiently regular enough taking into account the needs of any new and younger children who may not remember or may have not been present during the drills.

There is a strict no shoes policy in the baby and small toddler rooms which minimises the risk of contamination from outdoors. These children have their own purpose built and designed safe and secure indoor and play space. There are separate facilities for nappy changing and baby bottle preparation.

We observed a large piece of plastic in the pre-school and toddler outdoor play area which was hanging from a low bush which potentially could have posed a risk of harm to a child. The responsible individual confirmed to us on the day that a more formal system of making checks of the external environment would be included with immediate effect by including this to the daily checklist. This should ensure that there is a consistent approach to checking the outside environment for potential hazards,

Staff take care to ensure the environment is safe, clean and secure for the children.

### **3.2 How well do leaders ensure the suitability of the environment?**

Leaders provide a welcoming, friendly and inclusive environment where children can grow and develop.

We saw children could be positively challenged by the outdoor facilities which had been purposefully designed and equipped with innovative areas for children of different ages and abilities. In the free flowing spaces in the main playrooms we saw children accessed the resources set out for them. Storage boxes were labelled so children could see inside. There were well defined areas of learning such as reading, construction, small world, water and sand play, paint mark making and craft.

The whole environment was bright and welcoming and provided children with extensive opportunities to investigate and explore, they could jump run play alone or with friends or simply relax in a tranquil area taking in the sights, smells and sounds of the natural habitat.

Leaders ensure the environment provides a comprehensive range of play opportunities suitable for the age range of children cared for.

### **3.3 How well do leaders ensure the quality of resources and equipment?**

Leaders provide children with a superb range of high quality resources and equipment.

We saw that all rooms were very well resourced with equipment and resources suitable for the stage of development of the children present. There were suitable child sized tables and chairs and staff had a comfortable seating to nurse children.

The equipment had been carefully set out and was modified during the day in response to the children's requests and interests. There was a diverse range of toys and resources and children celebrate different festivals.

Leaders ensure children have access to a suitable range of resources.

## **4. Leadership and Management**

### **Summary**

Leaders are highly motivated and professional. They are thorough and go above and beyond expectations to try to ensure the service they deliver is excellent. Self evaluation is embedded in their practice and views of others are taken into consideration. Staff work effectively together and are managed well. Leaders have formed relationships with parents and the local community which support them in providing effective care.

### **Our findings**

#### **4.1 How effective is leadership?**

Leaders have a clear vision of the service which is shared with stakeholders.

Leaders provided parents with a colourful prospectus with information about the service, this included policies and procedures and the statement of purpose. The information provided parents with a lot of information in order to decide whether the service suited their and their child's needs. Leaders had a sense of purpose and high expectations to promote and sustain improvement and good outcomes for children. For example they had purchased new equipment and ensured through regular meetings with staff, they all understood their roles and responsibilities. Leaders have ensured excellent play work principles and practice underpin their work with children. The service strongly delivered equal access for all and outstanding care to children with additional needs, and complex medical needs. We saw consistent practice throughout the service and staff worked well as team.

We discussed concerns and complaints with leaders and noted that complaints and concerns were kept securely with a reference sheet available. However, in order to ensure we can access all records with ease as part of our inspection process it is recommended that a separate record sheet is maintained of all sensitive information about relevant children.

We also observed that the complaint procedure referred parents to a named inspector and recommended this is removed to ensure that any notifications, complaints and concerns which may be made about the service are received effectively and responded to by us as required.

Leadership is strong and has a clear sense of purpose which results in good outcomes for children.

## **4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?**

Leaders promote a positive culture of self evaluation. There is ongoing review and development of the service.

We saw that the views of parents, carers, children and staff were effectively sought. All had contributed to the annual quality of care review. Leaders had used questionnaires, suggestions box, leaver's questionnaires staff supervisions and meetings. Children had many opportunities to talk about the activities they enjoyed and say what they would like to change.

External quality assurance awards are undertaken, for example, the Healthy and Sustainable Pre School. This has had a positive impact on the health and well being of the children, along with Designed to Smile Gold award. The environment is of an exceptionally high quality and is well maintained. For example, since the last inspection the service received a Re-accreditation Gold award for the Healthy Working Wales Small Workplace.

We spoke to many of the staff in all areas of the service, without exception they gave complimentary feedback and several detailed examples of why they love working at the service.

Leaders know the service well. Strengths and areas for development are recognised and action taken to maintain high standards and constantly improve practice.

## **4.3 How effective is the management of practitioners, staff and other resources?**

Leaders have systems in place for managing staff.

We inspected staff files and saw robust recruitment processes were in place ensuring staff had the relevant experience and qualifications. The staff team are exceptionally highly qualified and leaders continually encourage staff to reach their full potential. For example since the last inspection 8 staff had completed their Advanced Practice level 5 Child Care learning and Development. We saw that induction and appraisal documentation and individual supervision records, were well maintained. We also spoke to staff who confirmed that they had a good experience during their 1.1 supervision and appraisal meetings. They told us that all the leaders are kind and approachable with a meaningful open door policy if they had concerns about a child or a personal problem.

Leaders have well established systems for managing recruitment, identifying training needs and working with practitioners to set goals and improve performance.

#### **4.4 How effective are partnerships?**

Leaders keep parents well informed about the service and have meaningful partnerships with other professionals

Leaders and staff were approachable and communicated openly with parents when required. We saw discussions were relaxed with trust and staff chatted about what the children had been doing. Early Years teachers regularly attend and their advice is respected and suggestions acted upon.

Leaders ensure that partnerships with parents and others benefit the children and their families.

## **5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection**

### **5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections**

None

### **5.2 Areas of non compliance identified at this inspection**

None

### **5.3 Recommendations for improvement**

**The responsible individual needs to ensure:**

- Adequate precautions against the risk of fire, for example ensure by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, taking into account the needs of any new and younger children;
- all parts of the premises are free from hazards to their safety, for example the outdoor play area is checked sufficiently through out the day for materials that may be blown in over the perimeter fence such as plastic wrapping which may pose a risk harm to a child;
- staff consistently following the correct procedure for handling food as outlined in the Food Standards Agency and Environmental Health requirements;
- staff movements throughout the service for relief, and or, assistance cover is comprehensively recorded in the daily registers;
- a separate record sheet is maintained of any sensitive information about relevant children to ensure that we can access the relevant information.
- policies are revised to remove named inspectors, in particular the complaint policy.



## 6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full unannounced inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. One inspector visited the service for approximately 9 hours on Wednesday 5 July 2017.

- We observed the children and the care they received;
- We spoke to the responsible individual and the nursery managers;
- We spoke to the children present;
- We spoke to staff;
- We spoke to 4 parents as they arrived to drop off their children and to 3 parents as they collected their children;
- We gave out parent and staff questionnaires to be returned to us;
- We inspected all areas of the service used by the children and the condition of their choice of toys and equipment;
- We looked at a wide range of records. We focused on the policies, procedures, registers and children's records and,
- We observed the children and the care they received. We used our Short Observational Framework for Inspection (SOFI 2) tool to capture evidence of children's engagement and the care provided by staff.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website [www.cssiw.org.uk](http://www.cssiw.org.uk)

## About the service

Type of care provided	Childrens Day Care Full Day Care
Responsible Individual	Peter Graham
Person in charge	Rebecca Mottram Catrin Davies
Registered maximum number of places	91
Age range of children	0 - 5
Opening hours	07:30 – 18:00
Operating Language of the service	English
Date of previous CSSIW inspection	29 July 2015
Dates of this inspection visit(s)	05/07/2017
Is this a Flying Start service?	No
Is early year's education for three and four year olds provided at the service?	Yes
Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer?	No the service does not provide an 'Active offer' of the Welsh language because it is situated in a primarily English speaking area, however. This is a service that demonstrates a good effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.
<b>Additional Information:</b> This service is one of two full day care nurseries owned by this provider.	