

# Lomond School Nursery Day Care of Children

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**Type of inspection:**  
Unannounced

**Completed on:**  
23 February 2023

**Service provided by:**  
Lomond School Limited

**Service provider number:**  
SP2006008097

**Service no:**  
CS2003016882

## About the service

This service registered with the Care Inspectorate on 1 April 2011. The service provider is Lomond school Limited.

Lomond School Nursery is a daycare of children service. The service operates from their own designated space and enclosed outdoor play area and garden within the Claredon building and grounds of the primary school, located in a residential area of Helensburgh. The service operates during school term time.

1. To provide a care service to a maximum of 24 children not yet attending primary school at any one time.
  - no more than 24 are aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school full time.
2. Adult:child ratios will be a minimum of:
  - 3 years and over - 1:8 if the children attend more than 4 hours per day, or
  - 1:10 if the children attend for less than 4 hours per day.

## About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection, carried out by two early learning and childcare inspectors, which took place on 16 February 2023. To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about the 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:

- observed practice and daily life
- spoke with children using the service
- reviewed documents
- spoke with management and staff
- emailed parents/carers to gather their views and feedback.

**Key messages**

- The quality of children's care, play and learning was outstanding.
- Staff were very nurturing, caring and respectful.
- 'In the moment' planning strategies were excellent, child centred and very responsive to children's needs and curiosity, with staff spontaneously extending possible lines of challenge and enquiry.
- The indoor and outdoor spaces were richly resourced to promote children's natural curiosity and imagination, their sense of wellbeing, wonder and adventure.
- Children were absorbed in their play.
- The service communicated exceptionally well with parents and other professionals who may be involved in a child's care and support.
- The service was extremely well led and had a very dedicated staff team with a positive ethos of attendance resulting in outstanding support for the continuity of care, transitions and communication with 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?	6 - Excellent
How good is our setting?	6 - Excellent
How good is our leadership?	6 - Excellent
How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent

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

## How good is our care, play and learning?

6 - Excellent

We made an evaluation of excellent for this key question as the quality of children's experiences and outcomes was outstanding. We found innovative, effective practice and very high-quality performance across a range of activities from which other services could learn. We were confident that this level of performance was sustainable and that it will be maintained.

### Quality indicator 1.1: Nurturing care and support

Staff were very nurturing, caring and respectful. They knew children very well and had developed trusted and loving relationships with them to nurture, support their wellbeing and make them feel valued, safe and secure. Staff were extremely skilled at engaging with children, encouraging them to make choices, share, follow their interests and promote friendships.

Parents told us:

"I feel the staff have a deep, well-informed and knowledgeable understanding of [my child] as a whole child. This is evident through the detailed and personal feedback we receive - both in [their] learning journal and face to face. The nursery environment is always calm and nurturing. I'm reassured by how happily [my child] runs in and how warmly [they] regard the staff."

"They encourage and facilitate such strong bonds between the children with an emphasis on teamwork and friendship. It's a warm environment where my [child] has felt supported in creating friendships and enhancing [their] social skills."

Children enjoyed a very positive, relaxed nurturing lunchtime experience with a hot nutritious meal that took account of their preferences and individual dietary needs. Children were able to choose where they would like to sit with their friends and were very independent and confident about serving themselves throughout their lunch experience. Staff encouraged friendly social interactions, developed conversations and supported children very well when they needed it.

Children's personal plans contained relevant core information about their individual needs and preferences. This was promoting choice and independence with home visits enhancing and tailoring bespoke transitions between home and nursery. There was a streamlined and consistent approach to documenting children's needs and how these will be met. Staff were recording detailed information to support children's health, wellbeing and safety with a focus on observations and next steps linked to clear progression pathways and outcomes.

Staff were communicating with parents through an online application. Online profiles were providing a very effective link with home, giving parents rich information on children's learning experiences, outcomes and progress. Children were able to leave their own voice messages and videos for their parents.

The service was communicating exceptionally well with parents through regular conversations, meetings with key staff and other professionals who may be involved in a child's care and support.

Parents told us:

"From the updates we receive on [their] learning journal we know that the activities [our child] is involved in reflect [their] personal needs and [they] are both supported and challenged, as appropriate. We are always updated as to what [our child's] achievements have been and how these will inform [their] next steps. In addition to this feedback we feel very much involved in [our child's] nursery experience - our views are sought, welcomed and acted upon."

"The communication with [management] is excellent and the updates we get relating to [their] My Learning Journal and [online app] are really useful and informative. All staff are warm, caring and compassionate and this is very much reflected in how well my [child] has settled into this new environment. As a parent it has been such a worry-free transition and this has very much been because of and through the support of [management] and all staff within the nursery."

"As a parent of more than one child in the nursery, I can see how adaptive the nursery staff are at meeting each child's needs. They really go above and beyond to ensure that every need is met and encourage integration between children of all ages."

### Quality indicator 1.3: Play and learning

The quality of children's play and learning was outstanding. Children were happy, eager to play and deeply engaged in the learning experiences on offer. Staff were carrying out observations to develop natural curiosity, a sense of wonder and progression in children's play and learning through promoting independence and offering challenge. Children were having great fun exploring, experimenting and seeking out resources that captured their interest, imagination and natural curiosity. Staff were extremely skilled at supporting them to explore their ideas, build on their interests and direct their play. For example, building rockets with recycled tin cans and magnets. Staff developed this experience by planning in the moment and extending the learning using rich, descriptive language to support children in their discovery of the properties of magnets. Staff were promoting numeracy, literacy, and health and wellbeing organically throughout children's play. These included richly expanding conversations to include number values, weights and measures.

Parents told us:

"One thing that sets Lomond apart from other places we have experienced/visited is that there is always an air of calm about it. It's absolutely a credit to the amazing staff and [management], but the children seem to be busy yet relaxed and content, cooperative playing with each other and interacting with [staff]. [Our child] is never overwhelmed or exhausted after nursery - [they] are smiling and chatting away telling us all about [their] day."

"The staff were so wonderful, they really tailored their approach to help [them] settle and let us have a flexible routine to fit around [our child's needs]. It is also worth noting that their approach of child-led activities has really suited [Our child] - we have definitely seen a leap in [their] development since [they] joined."

'In the moment' planning strategies were excellent, child centred and very responsive to children's needs and curiosity. Staff spontaneously extended possible lines of challenge and enquiry. For example, children were extremely interested in water colour and were invited to add the colour white to experiment with light and shade. This was extended further to include discussion about particles dissolving, disappearing and

evaporating. Each child also had their own 'Jotter' where staff skilfully gathered children's thoughts, ideas and interests.

Staff included children fully in making informed choices about leading their play and learning. Developing strands of learning that responded to individual children's specific needs and interests. This further enhanced their learning and enriched their experiences, with next steps reflecting their developing skills and progress.

A parent told us "The staff are so calm, caring and capable and we've always felt like they take an open-minded look at our [child's] individual needs and [their] learning stage. We regularly receive updates from the nursery staff and my [child's] key person about activities which [they] have been involved in which always blend learning outcomes with fun and tactile approaches. Their approach of allowing children to discover what they would like to learn about and meeting the child where they are to enhance every interaction is so much appreciated."

We were impressed with how staff supported children's play and learning through well judged and impactful quality interactions. They utilised their extensive knowledge and understanding of child development, relevant theory and practice, to very skilfully support children to develop their curiosity and creativity, extending their thinking and widening their skills.

## How good is our setting?

**6 - Excellent**

We made an evaluation of excellent for this key question as the quality of children's experiences and outcomes was outstanding. We found innovative, effective practice and very high-quality performance across a range of activities from which other services could learn. We were confident that this level of performance was sustainable and that it will be maintained.

### Quality indicator 2.2: Children experience high quality facilities

Children were absorbed in their play, flourishing and thriving in their nursery setting. They had ownership of their environment, freely expressing themselves, making active choices and influencing the daily design and content of their play space. The indoor and outdoor spaces were richly resourced with recycled and natural, open ended materials and loose parts play to promote children's natural curiosity and imagination, their sense of wellbeing, wonder and adventure. For example, a variety of teapots and china, vinyl records and world globes as part of the home corner, as well as plants, herbs, a pestle and mortar, utensils and cake stands full of wooden letters and numbers.

Staff had fully involved children in the development of their outdoor play space. Children relished being outdoors everyday. Risky play through climbing, balancing and building with natural materials offered children challenge, developed their resilience and self awareness. The outdoor environment was an extension of the indoor learning experience, supporting children's independence, sense of wonder, purposeful play and responsible risk-taking. Children also had numerous opportunities to engage in the wider surrounding community with visits to the beach, woodland and local parks. A parent told us "We really value the amount of time spent outdoors through explorative play and also on the trips they take to the P.E. department to learn the key aspects of using their bodies and healthy movement."

Children had space to play in small groups and by themselves, the environment was bright, clean and well ventilated. Furniture was child sized with areas and soft furnishings for relaxation and comfort. The

building had a secure door entry system, was being regularly maintained and in a good state of decoration and repair.

Parents told us:

"Being at Lomond, [our child] has completely thrived, and has had lots of new experiences which he/she has loved: particularly trips to the beach, and the minibus trips each week to their PE lesson. The facilities at the school are marvellous, with a beautiful garden to play in, and a classroom perfectly laid out for learning and play."

"Lomond Nursery is an incredible setting which offers all children a wonderful nurturing environment to learn in. The [staff] are all calm and patient with the children and constantly provide a wide variety of opportunities to learn through play every single day. If parents have any concerns about their children they immediately make space to invite us in so that we can discuss these together and make a plan to move forward."

## How good is our leadership?

**6 - Excellent**

We made an evaluation of excellent for this key question as the quality of children's experiences and outcomes was outstanding. We found innovative, effective practice and very high-quality performance across a range of activities from which other services could learn. We were confident that this level of performance was sustainable and that it will be maintained.

### Quality indicator 3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are well led

Management and staff were passionate and committed to the ongoing improvement and development of the service to achieve the best outcomes they could for children and their families. They were always striving to be the best they can be, continued to be very outcome focussed and had maintained their excellent standards. The service's aims and objective statement set out a clear vision for the setting. Their improvement plan identified appropriate priorities for improvement. For example, develop outdoor space and learning, family learning and parental engagement and community links. The quality of play was firmly at the heart of their improvement planning.

The staff team were exceptional. We observed the impact of their very high quality interactions on children's self esteem, confidence and independence. Their commitment and motivation was reflected in their continued professional development. Honing their skills and expertise through training, research based practice and study. These included collaboratively working with families on a project to understand the benefits of 'barefoot play' an approach that builds neural connections and develops skills such as balance, co-ordination and spatial awareness.

Management and staff were using robust and very well developed processes for self-evaluation to critically reflect on their work, through staff meetings, daily professional discussions and open and honest reflection on their practice. This was having a fundamental impact on positive outcomes for children and families, with the child's voice firmly rooted at the centre of the planning and development of the service. For example, the excellent 'Garden Book' created by children with help from staff to develop their outdoor space and learning area, featured pictures, maps and designs made by them capturing their thoughts, ideas and vision. Children proudly shared 'their book' with us.

To support and sustain continuous improvement the management team and staff had firmly embedded systematic procedures to monitor and evaluate all aspects of their service delivery. For example, regular surveys to parents linked to our new quality framework, monitoring calendars, staff supervision, development and peer review.

Management and staff communicated and engaged extremely well with families. Parents were given regular updates on their child's development and learning through daily conversations, planned consultations, telephone calls and digital technology. All parents felt communication was excellent and a key strength as they had a variety of ways to share information with management and staff.

Parents told us:

"In short, the nursery is excellent. I could not find a single fault if I tried. The staff are attentive, caring, highly skilled and always, without hesitation, meet the needs of my children. Regular, continuous feedback is provided and always brings a smile to my face."

"The staff make all children feel at ease and it has been such a joy watching them develop through their time at Lomond nursery. It really is the most wonderful, special place and I know my children are being given the best possible start. I can't thank them enough!"

## How good is our staff team?

**6 - Excellent**

We made an evaluation of excellent for this key question as the quality of children's experiences and outcomes was outstanding. We found innovative, effective practice and very high-quality performance across a range of activities from which other services could learn. We were confident that this level of performance was sustainable and that it will be maintained.

### Quality indicator 4.3: Staff deployment

Staff were flexible, committed and worked seamlessly together. The nursery was appropriately staffed with full account taken of the ongoing needs of the children. Staff leadership roles and responsibilities were embedded with an excellent skills mix within the staff team. Staff communicated and deployed themselves extremely well throughout the day to supervise children's safety and welfare and support their play experiences. Their effective team working was an inspiring role model for children, encouraging and supporting them to play co-operatively, have a voice and work collectively to shape and plan their day.

The service had a very dedicated staff team with a positive ethos of attendance resulting in outstanding support for the continuity of care, transitions and communication with families.

Staff engaged very well in the inspection process demonstrating their skills, expertise and enthusiasm for their continued professional and academic development. They were dynamic, very responsive and attuned to children's needs. Their ethos of mutual trust and respect was promoting a happy, secure and supportive environment for children and their families.

A key strength of the setting was the joined up working between staff and management. Staff told us they felt very well supported, respected, valued and led by the management team. Meaningful supervision provided an opportunity to reflect on their role and discuss plans for future learning.



Parents told us:

"Our experience of Lomond has been overwhelmingly positive in terms of the environment, learning and staff. The staff team are highly professional in all aspects and I am hugely appreciative of the nurture and genuine care they show towards [our child's] academic, social and emotional needs."

"The staff are incredible. [Management] and the nursery team are just brilliant, and offer a home from home experience in the care and knowledge they provide."

## Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

## Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	6 - Excellent
1.1 Nurturing care and support	6 - Excellent
1.3 Play and learning	6 - Excellent
How good is our setting?	6 - Excellent
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	6 - Excellent
How good is our leadership?	6 - Excellent
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	6 - Excellent
How good is our staff team?	6 - Excellent
4.3 Staff deployment	6 - Excellent

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