



## Little Explorers

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** EY313883  
**Inspection date** 17 March 2006  
**Inspector** Janette Mary White

**Setting Address** 206c Maidstone Road, Rochester, Kent, ME1 3EJ

**Telephone number** 01634 852501

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**Registered person** Little Explorers

**Type of inspection** Integrated

**Type of care** Full day care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Explorers opened in 2005 and operates from 3 rooms in a converted house. It is situated in Rochester, Kent . A maximum of 41 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 19 children aged from 6 months to under 4 years on roll. Of these, 3 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide

catchment area.

The nursery employs seven staff. Four of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing an awareness of positive hygiene practices through planned activities and the daily routine. For example, they know why they wash their hands and wipe noses, because staff explain the importance of doing so. Children are confident about taking care of their own needs, they wash their hands and use soap from the dispenser after using the toilet. Staff consider the protection of babies from cross infection by wear disposable gloves during nappy changes. Although, they do not wear aprons. Appropriate daily routines ensure children understand that they need to put on aprons before painting and messy play promoting their independence in personal care. Toys and equipment are cleaned regularly. Children learn the significance of physical activity through the nursery education curriculum. They have opportunities to experience fine manipulative skills as well as vigorous outdoor play. They know that physical exercise helps to make them 'strong' and they know when they need to rest.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. Babies are offered regular drinks. Although, older children do not have frequent opportunities to freely access drinking water. They learn about healthy eating through discussions as they sit together and receive support from staff who encourage them as they eat. Menus are provided for parents and children can choose from a range of healthy snacks such as bananas, apples, melon and raisins. Food complies with individual dietary requirements to ensure the dietary needs of all children are met. Some of the staff hold a current first aid certificate so they are able to administer first aid in the event of an accident. This ensures children's welfare in the event of an emergency. Parents provide prior written consent to administer medication which ensures children receive the correct dosage according to their needs. Children are protected through the use of records such as the accident book which provides information for parents. However, the provider has not ensured that all parents have given written permission to seek emergency treatment or advice on behalf of their child.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children arrive happily and settle well. Staff support and comfort children who are new to the setting. Children benefit from playing in a sufficiently organised environment allowing them to freely move around. The main front door entrance is identified as a risk and remains a potential hazard. To address this issue staff are

usually deployed appropriately. There are acceptable procedures for the safe arrival and departure of children. Children are supervised when playing outside. This area is enclosed by a fence and gate, and staff regularly check for safety. Outdoor play equipment is checked, ensuring it is suitable for children's use. The emergency evacuation procedure has been practised with the children. Although, not all the staff are familiar with fire drill practices. The displays of children's work shows that staff value children's contributions.

Children have easy access to a balanced range of toys and resources appropriate for their age. Toys and resources are carefully selected to ensure they are suitable for children and provide appropriate choices for them. There is a sufficient range of toys, furniture and equipment that provide varied opportunities for children to relax or to be active. Child height furniture encourages independence and staff ensure young children begin to understand how to keep safe when accessing resources. Sleeping babies are monitored and staff regularly check them. Staff use the resources to meet the needs of different children. They have an appropriate understanding of child protection issues and know what action to take if they have concerns about a child in their care. This ensures staff can act in the child's best interest.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children of all ages and stages of development enjoy a range of acceptable activities, resources and experiences within a caring environment. Babies enjoy the benefits of lots of cuddles and close contact with staff and have secure relationships with their key workers. Even babies new to the nursery are settled and content, because staff spend much of their time playing and talking with them. The provider uses the Birth to three matters framework to adapt activities to promote younger children's learning. Babies enjoy the colours, sounds and feel of interactive toys, which they explore with interest and concentration. They develop early communication skills, because staff use routines, including nappy changes and meal times, to engage in warm verbal contact with them. Outdoor experiences for babies are minimal. This hinders their opportunities to explore and discover the environment.

Children between the ages of one and five years have sound relationships with staff and are not afraid to ask for support or a cuddle. They are beginning to show interest and involvement in a range of accessible activities. Staff have a secure understanding of the range of experiences required to enable babies and children to make progress using their senses and creative abilities. These include musical activities, which promote opportunities for children to explore rhythm and sing action songs such as 'Bob the builder'. Easily accessible books help to develop children's imaginations and communication skills. Investigation through resources including paint, water and sand, helps all children to represent their experiences and ideas, and make connections as they play. The planning of activities does not take account of differentiation for the less or more able children.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory

progress in their learning. Some of the staff have an understanding of the Foundation Stage and the plans ensure that all children have learning opportunities. The activities provided are appropriately planned and the learning is reinforced through practical experiences.

Children show a sense of belonging as they learn and play together. Most respond to challenges and are generally engaged in meaningful activities. Children are friendly and their confidence is growing as they share their ideas and experiences such as playing the 'Incy Wincy spider' game. Many activities successfully encourage children's independence and support the choices available to them, such as the creative use of painting and the construction equipment. Children access the physical and imaginative play activities eagerly and with confidence. They enjoy counting and singing routines which are established activities during each session. They know what to expect and are stimulated by staff input and support.

Children enjoy their independent access to the books and handle them carefully. There are few planned opportunities when children are encouraged to use cards or posters to develop their reading and writing skills, for example by 'naming' their own work, or finding their places using name cards. Children are gaining confidence with numbers and counting. They enjoy musical instruments and engage in action songs and circle games. Children's experiences are sometimes limited by the lack of planned opportunities to freely access information communication technology such as the computer. Children count confidently with adult help and enjoy number rhymes and songs. They are beginning to use mathematical terms such as 'more' and can identify mathematical shapes. Children's understanding of space, shape and measure is developing. They recognise the properties of simple shapes and make patterns as staff provide opportunities in the sand play. Overall the provision plans and provides activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

There is a policy on equality which promotes anti-discriminatory practice for all children. Children have access to varied resources, toys and equipment to enable their individual development. However, examples of positive images are not displayed in the main rooms limiting children's daily opportunities to develop a balanced view of society. Children with special needs are welcomed into the nursery and staff adapt activities so they can experience a range of stimulating activities appropriate for their level of ability.

Babies and young children show a sense of belonging because they are regularly acknowledged and affirmed by staff. Staff use the information they gather on the children to settle them appropriately, for instance, the routines for babies initially follow the already established patterns, causing minimal disruption when they join the nursery. Most information recorded on children is kept confidential. Although, nappy changing charts are not confidential. Children are developing self assurance and confidence when making choices and seeking comfort or help. Young children

attempt to feed themselves and freely communicate the word 'ta' to staff as they eagerly await their meal at the table. All children are generally well behaved.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. There is a complaints policy. The provider has a sound understanding of the policy for parents to make a complaint, but is less familiar with the complaints procedures. There are systems in place to ensure that information is shared with parents in order to support children; the babies have contact diaries which record daily information about their routines. The parents of older children receive information verbally. Although, some parents feel written information would be helpful in order to support their child. Parents are offered a sufficient variety of information on Birth to three matters framework and on the Foundation stage curriculum, including planned activities and examples of the children's work which can be taken home or is on display. They are invited to discuss the progress of their children and access records of assessment. There are no systems currently to ensure parents are given opportunities to provide all the relevant information and contribute to their child's development and individual needs.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They have sound relationships with members of staff and other children. Positive behaviour is promoted and children benefit from the acknowledgement of some basic ground rules. However, the ground rules are not promoted in a way to enhance children's independence and self help skills such as in pictures and words. Children are encouraged to care for toys and each other and to take turns and share. They are cared for according to parents' wishes which provides consistency and builds their confidence.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Most staff, including the manager, are appropriately qualified and vetted, and children are never left alone with unvetted persons. Records identify future planned training, such as the Birth to three matters framework for the baby room staff. Staff are inducted and their professional development is addressed during appraisals. This means children's care, learning, and well being are promoted. Staffing ratios meet with requirements and children have plenty of space to move around and make choices as they play. Toys and resources are organised to encourage safe and easy access for all children. Policies and procedures contribute to the management of the provision and help to promote children's welfare, care and learning. Records about individual children are shared with their parents. Records of attendance show clear arrival and departure times for children, staff and visitors. The registration certificate is now displayed for parents in the main corridor.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. Most staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and leaders identify aims for the personal development and achievements of children. However, differentiation within the planning is not clearly identified. Staff are committed and are continually improving the provision. The integration of care and nursery education is sound and enhances children's learning. The provider is continuing to improve the recruitment and vetting procedures.

Currently there is a system in place to retain Criminal Records Bureau information. Although, the storage of some information is not kept securely. There are now details of the registered person, all persons employed and any other person who will be in unsupervised contact with the children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure children have frequent opportunities to freely access drinking water.
- continue to review and develop a system to ensure parents are given opportunities to provide all the relevant information about children's individual needs and development.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop further opportunities for children to freely access information communication technology.

- continue to review and develop the planning to ensure it takes account of differentiation and extends learning for less and more able children.

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