

Little Learners

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY268807
Inspection date 19/03/2009
Inspector Jenny Howell

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Little Learners Crèche is operated by the Adult Education Service. It opened in 2003 and runs from a converted section of the college. The crèche has sole use of a large playroom, a smaller playroom, an area for babies, an entrance hall and toilets. Children also have access to a small, fully enclosed area for outdoor play. The crèche is situated near the centre of Chelmsford. A maximum of 14 children may attend the crèche at any one time. The crèche is open Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:00 during the college term time. The crèche is on the ground floor of the building and all areas are fully accessible.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There are currently 24 children on roll. Children come from a wide catchment area, as the parents who use the crèche are often studying or working at the college. The crèche has the facilities to cater for children with special needs and a large number of children attending speak English as an additional language.

The crèche employs four staff. All of these hold appropriate qualifications and one is working towards a higher level qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority and the Pre School Learning Alliance.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. The setting is effective in meeting the needs of all children as staff know their individual needs very well. Children enjoy a good range of activities which help them to make good progress in their learning and development. Good partnerships are established with parents in order to support a two-way flow of relevant information. The setting has a process of self-evaluation in place and is able to identify areas for development in order to bring about improvements for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop the use of sensitive observational assessment in order to support children in making progress towards the early learning goals.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting is effectively managed. All required policies and procedures are in place to support the smooth running of the setting on a daily basis. All staff working with children are suitable to do so and demonstrate a high level of commitment to providing good quality care and learning opportunities. They have all undergone checks through the Criminal Records Bureau and also hold appropriate levels of

qualifications, including first aid. Staff are well deployed to ensure that all children receive high levels of support and good use is made of casual staff to ensure that adult to child ratios are maintained at all times.

Very good use is made of space and resources. These are organised to provide children with a wide range of age-appropriate activities. The outdoor area has recently been developed and this provides children with good opportunities to play, exercise and learn through the natural environment. All areas used by children are safe and secure. A regular risk assessment of all areas takes place on a daily basis and staff monitor children at all times to ensure they are playing safely.

The setting has recently implemented a formal process of self-evaluation which is supporting them in reflecting on the service they provide. Staff are able to identify areas for development and take action to bring about improvements for example, by developing the outdoor area. They have also addressed the recommendation raised at the last inspection by improving the information they share with parents about how to raise concerns or make a complaint.

Good relationships are established with parents who are warmly welcomed into the setting. A wide range of information is gathered from parents before children attend and this supports staff in meeting children's individual needs. All relevant parental permissions are obtained, ensuring that staff can care for children in line with parents' wishes at all times. A good range of information is available to parents, through individual daily diary sheets, posters, leaflets and termly newsletters.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Learning is supported very well by skilled and enthusiastic staff. The learning environment is effectively organised to provide children with a wide range of opportunities to explore, investigate and play freely, both indoors and outdoors. Resources are set out in clear areas, providing children with opportunities, for example, to enjoy books, to exercise and develop physical skills, to act out real-life through role-play and to express themselves through messy activities. Weekly activities are planned to provide a good balance of adult-led and child-led learning opportunities. This helps to ensure that play is purposeful and is based on children's interests.

Planning covers all areas of learning and staff ensure that activities are based on children's individual learning and development needs or the games and toys they have shown an interest in. Staff observe what children do and use this information to support them in helping children to make progress. However, information from assessment is not yet used effectively enough to ensure that individual children are supported in making progress in all areas of learning.

Children develop good personal and social skills. Babies and young children play closely with adults, developing an interest in the world around them and increasing their confidence to try new things. Older children enjoy playing with and alongside others and are provided with opportunities to learn to share and play

collaboratively. Children develop their communication skills as they have a go at new words, chat or babble to staff happily and make their needs known. They develop a love of books as they have free access to a good range of age-appropriate books which they can enjoy in comfort both alone or with an adult. Lots of mark-making resources are available, including pencils, paint and chalk which support children in developing early writing skills. Children learn that print carries meaning as they see posters and labels on display all around them and also enjoy activities which help them to link sounds and letters.

Children have good opportunities to learn about the world around them. They learn about celebrations from around the world, for example Mother's Day and Chinese New Year and well as observing the changing of the seasons in their local environment. Children enjoy a good range of opportunities to explore and investigate, through access to play-dough, sand, water, mirrors and fabrics of different textures. Children enjoy free access to space and equipment for physical play in all areas of the setting. They have good opportunities to express themselves as they can access a range of art and craft activities and also enjoy playing musical instruments or singing and dancing along to the music playing in the background.

A key person system is in place and this supports staff in promoting the welfare of all children. Children's health and well-being are promoted through simple procedures such as washing hands before snack time and by staff following appropriate nappy changing routines. Children enjoy daily opportunities to exercise and their snacks are varied, healthy and nutritious. Drinks are freely available at all times. Children learn how to keep themselves safe as staff support them in using equipment correctly and practise fire-evacuation routines together. Children behave extremely well and this, alongside frequent praise and encouragement from staff helps them to develop as confident and independent learners.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

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.