

The Little School by the Lake

Inspection report for early years provision

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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

The Little School by the Lake registered in 1998 and re-registered in 2005 under its current ownership. It is one of two privately owned nurseries. It is registered on the Early Years Register, and both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The premises comprise of four toddler and pre-school rooms, a separate baby unit, and an enclosed outdoor area, with good access available. The nursery serves families from the local community and surrounding villages.

The nursery is registered to care for a total of 60 children, of whom 30 may be under two years of age. There are currently 43 children, aged from three months to five years on roll. These are separated into groups according to their age and stage of development. There are currently 12 children receiving nursery education funding. Children mostly attend for full day care, but some attend for various sessions. The setting makes provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week for 52 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 08:00 until 18:00, Monday to Friday. There are nine staff working with the children. Of these, seven have appropriate early years qualifications and two are currently on a training programme. The setting receives support from a mentor from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the effectiveness of the provision is good. Children are very happy and secure because of the staff's dedication and commitment. The setting is extremely effective in ensuring children progress well through the Early Years Foundation Stage and provision for their emotional well-being is excellent. A highly effective system for self-evaluation is used to ensure continuous improvement of the setting. The very good two-way communication and partnership with parents significantly enhances the children's care. The provision's policies and the staff's regard to inclusion ensures that every child is supported and cared for exceptionally well.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that all equipment is suitable for purpose, including the nappy changing mats

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The robust policies and procedures in place are implemented effectively and shared with parents to ensure they are fully informed of the nursery's childcare

practices. The manager has extremely high aspirations for quality, which is evident through ongoing improvement, and ensures the children's learning, development and welfare. All staff are fully committed to working in partnership with parents and carers and have implemented effective systems to enable parents to share information. Parents are positively encouraged and supported to contribute to their child's learning and development. This is successfully achieved with the use of 'about me' information, children's records and through regular written and verbal feedback from staff. Settling-in arrangements are agreed with parents and contribute towards children becoming confident and comfortable in the nursery. Daily diary sheets and discussions keep parents up-to-date with their child's daily activities, routines and well-being.

Secure procedures are in place for recruitment, induction and training. The management team encourage staff to attend training, which ensures that children are cared for by a dedicated and experienced team. An informative safeguarding policy is understood by all staff members and attendance by the team at safeguarding training ensures the children's well-being is not compromised. Risk assessments are completed to ensure the environment and activities, both indoors and outdoors, remain safe for children. Most equipment is clean and in good condition. Extensive monitoring and evaluation of the provision enables the management and staff to identify areas for improvement. Consideration is given to the children, parents and staff to ensure a quality service is provided.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are able to play and learn in an exceptionally child-friendly and welcoming environment. Staff have a very sound understanding of child development and how children learn. Children are provided with an excellent range of play and learning opportunities as staff effectively use their knowledge to support the children's interests. For example, children express repeated interest in dressing up as princesses and hairdressers. One child brushes another child's hair and then 'dries' it while describing to him what she is doing. Children are able to independently access an abundance of resources and this enables them to make choices. They direct their own learning and play, for example through 'plan, do and review', where children choose their own activities from a range of pictures. They then play freely and come back as a small group to discuss what they have been doing. They are discreetly and skilfully supported by staff. As a result children are happy, motivated and enthusiastic to learn. The free choices offered to children enables and empowers them to access and explore equipment at their own stage of development.

Children are happy, have fun and are secure within the nursery. Staff are exceptionally attentive, respectful and listen to the children. As a result children appear confident and are developing good self-esteem. A very effective key person system operates. Every child's uniqueness is valued and this system ensures staff provide each child with an individual approach. Excellent processes are in place to ensure good assessment, observation and planning for the next steps of learning. Parents are involved throughout the process and have many opportunities to contribute.

Children play in a bright and stimulating environment. Staff consider their individual interests and stages of learning when planning activities. Staff successfully incorporate these within the adult-led activities provided, covering all areas of learning, for example when baking scones they identify and weigh the ingredients. The rooms are attractively set out with children in mind and designated areas such as, mark making, mathematics, construction, creative, and cosy quiet areas ensure children can independently access a wide range of learning opportunities. The cosy, quiet play areas are used effectively by the children. Babies and toddlers are able to experience many tactile activities and enjoy cornflour and sand play. Very good opportunities are available to the children outdoors, playing in the woodland garden and using a wide variety of outdoor equipment.

Children's health and welfare is generally promoted well. However, some equipment such as changing mats are split and therefore a health hazard. Children independently access their own bathrooms that are clean and bright with suitable hand washing facilities. Clear visual aids are in place to remind children of the correct procedure to follow when using the toilet. They are able to access drinking water throughout the day. Children are encouraged to make healthy choices about what they eat and drink. They sit together to share nutritious meals and snacks, such as bread sticks, meat, fish, fruit and vegetables. Children are made comfortable should they need to sleep. Babies are provided with cots and their own bed linen. They are greeted and cuddled by smiling staff who maintain eye contact and conversation with them.

Children are able to learn and celebrate many different cultures and traditional days as these are incorporated within the planning. This enables the children to have an understanding of the world around them and embrace differences. They have many regular opportunities to learn about the wider world as they are taken on walks in the local area, have visits from people who help them, such as a crossing patrol officer, and play with toys and resources that are representative of diversity. Children's behaviour is very good as staff are dedicated and are consistently polite and respectful toward the children.

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?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

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?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
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?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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 are 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.