

Little Engines

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY376335
Inspection date 15/05/2009
Inspector Beverly Hallett

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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 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 Engines Day Nursery opened in 2003 and was re-registered in 2008 due to a change in company ownership. The nursery is one of three settings operated by Abacus Childcare Settings Ltd and is registered on the Early Years Register and compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery is situated in a small converted building close to Norwood Junction station in South Norwood. There is no outdoor play area, but visits are made to local parks. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 07:30 to 18:30. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery is registered to care for 11 children under three years old, there are currently eight children on roll. The setting supports children with English as an additional language. There are three members of staff who work at the setting, all of whom, including the manager, hold appropriate child care qualifications. Bank staff are available from the main company to cover staff absence. The setting receives support from local early years advisory teachers.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is satisfactory. Staff are kind and caring towards children, helping them to feel secure in their personal development and offer some good quality interaction to support their learning overall. Although written records to support learning and development are not rigorous and robust, permanent staff know individual children well and use this knowledge to ensure children's individual learning needs and interests are catered for. The management team have clear roles, and are able to evaluate their own strengths, as well as the areas of weakness and thereby plan for improvements. Partnerships with parents are developing well because staff act on parent feedback and parents are involved in the assessment of their child's progress.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the organisation of the environment to offer children continuous provision of accepted core activities to enable children's independent learning throughout the day
- review menus and cooking process to ensure children are provided with meals and snacks which follow healthy eating guidelines and that processed foods which are high in salt and sugar are limited
- develop planning systems to ensure focus activities are clearly planned to offer differentiation and cater for the unique learning and development needs of each child
- use the supervision and appraisal systems effectively to support all staff in developing good quality interaction skills

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager is dedicated to providing high quality care and education for children. She has a good understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and is able to use that understanding to reflect on and evaluate the provision, working with the senior management team to identify actions to make improvements to practice. As a result, improvement is ongoing and training is provided for staff to build on their learning. A good range of updated policies and procedures ensures that children are safe at all times.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are secure and enjoy their time at the nursery because they are kept safe through good policies and procedures. In addition, all staff have suitability checks and a clear understanding of child protection procedures and regular risk assessments ensure the main play areas are maintained in a safe and suitable condition.

Children are making satisfactory progress through the foundation stage of learning and some assessments of development are shared with parents. However, not enough detail is shared with parents about how children are progressing within the early learning goals for clear and achievable plans to be made for children's next steps. The permanent staff working at the setting know children well and make some plans for their progress informally. However, long term plans are based on random adult chosen topics, such as toys and transport, and whilst medium term planning lists next steps for each child, the way in which this is to be achieved lacks detail. For example, next steps in development simply lists activities to develop physical skills and balance as slides, balls and hoops, trip to the park and soft shapes. Consequently, it is not clear how these activities will meet the differing levels of learning and development for individual children. In addition, daily plans list many activities which are not actually available for the children to access. The planning relies very heavily on adult led and directed activities and there are few toys and resources available within the room which children can explore and access independently. As a result, children are not developing the kind of choice and control over their learning which supports them as active and independent learners. When staff do set out activities such as water play, children show much enthusiasm and are engaged for suitable periods of time. In addition, staff offer much praise and encouragement to children, and this extends their interest and enjoyment of the activities. However, because this is such a small staff team, any absence means that staff from other settings within the organisation often work with the children. These staff do not have the same connection with the children and as a result, children sometimes receive inconsistent levels of interaction as they play. Children's individual routines are respected and catered for, for example, sleep times and preferred ways of being put down to sleep. As a result, children feel confident and secure in the setting and are developing strong attachments to their carers. Children also show care and affection towards each other; older children give younger ones gentle cuddles and a child playing with a baby doll, puts on its nappy and cuddles it before offering it to another child. This shows that children's personal social and emotional development is developing well and they

have a growing awareness of the needs and feelings of others. Children are developing physical skills as they climb on and off the rocking toy with confidence, showing competent large physical skills. Menus show regular meals and snacks which appear to offer healthy eating choices. However, because of the limitations of the physical environment, main meals are cooked in a very small area on a two ring cooker. As a result, some meals rely heavily on processed foods and ready prepared sauces containing high amounts of salt and sugar, which are not healthy for children under three.

Through adult planned activities, children have some opportunities to develop an interest in mark making and there is a book area available in the room. However, it is difficult for children to access and sit in comfortably, with the books themselves being stored too high for them to reach easily. Children are beginning to develop skills which will support future economic well-being as they competently use technology such as compact disc players and wind up toys as part of their play. Support for children who speak English as an additional language has been considered and staff have some main words written in the children's home language to help them communicate and to support the children in feeling that their home language is valued. Behaviour is good in the nursery because children are in small family groups cared for by a caring and familiar adult.

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?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

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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