

Rothamsted Little Stars Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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.

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Description of the setting

Rothamsted Little Stars Nursery was registered in 2000 and operates from a purpose built building in the grounds of Rothamsted Park. The nursery is run by Bright Horizons Family Solutions Limited and serves mainly children whose parents work for the Rothamsted Agricultural Experimental Station, although some children attend from nearby towns and villages. The setting is fully accessible with ramps to the entrance and wide doorways. The nursery supports children who speak English as an additional language. Children have access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery is registered to provide 39 places for children on the Early Years Register and also operates a holiday club for 18 children, aged between four and eight years, and is registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. Children occupying these places share the same facilities as children in the early years age range.

The nursery employs seven permanent members of staff, a manager and a cook. The majority of staff hold appropriate childcare qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The nursery is highly effective and outcomes for children are consistently good and exemplary in significant areas. Highly effective partnerships between parents and carers ensure individual children's needs are met and their protection assured. Leadership and management, including the capacity for sustained improvement are outstanding. Staff create a very welcoming environment and are skilled at ensuring children benefit from the provision. Senior staff lead a culture of reflective practice and all staff work together to review the strengths and weaknesses of the setting. Extensive evaluations on all areas of the setting have been carried out since the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Consequently, the outstanding practice of the setting has been achieved through the determination and dedication of all the staff who show a genuine desire to promote the best care and opportunities for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- continue to plan and provide experiences which are appropriate to each child's stage of development as they progress towards the early learning goals; this refers to activities designed to promote understanding of everyday technology leading to skills to foster future economic well-being.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The excellent knowledge, experience and enthusiasm of the senior staff ensures strong leadership and the manager demonstrates a clear understanding of importance of driving improvement. There are high expectations and standards across all areas of practice, morale is very high and belief in the setting's success is shared by the management and staff. The dedication and commitment of the staff has a significant impact on the children's learning and development and their overall welfare. Effective implementation of comprehensive policies, records and procedures support the safe and efficient management of the setting and ensure that the needs of all the children are met. Robust safeguarding procedures are consistently implemented to ensure that children are protected. The nursery management and staff are involved in the self-evaluation process and have prioritised plans for the future. For example, they are developing science and nature topics, with visits to the beehives on the Rothamsted research site. Staff continuously review and update training and knowledge. Information is cascaded down to all staff at regular in-house training meetings and the excellent practice is shared between the other settings in the Bright Horizons Family Solutions group.

Staff demonstrate clear commitment to working with parents, carers and external agencies. Excellent systems are in place to share information such as newsletters, the parents' notice boards, and a regular exchange of verbal information. Reports about the children's progress and achievements are discussed with parents at regular consultation meetings and parents have ample opportunity to comment and share information on a daily basis. For example, comments made by parents in the children's development files are used to inform future planning, and evaluations completed by parents and children ensure that their suggestions, ideas and views are valued. Parents are extremely complimentary about the setting and the positive impact on their children's learning, development and care. For example, the setting received a high scoring response from recent questionnaires and receives further feedback from exit interviews and family satisfaction questionnaires. Parents and children meet their key worker at induction sessions where information is shared to give a clear picture of the child's needs and abilities. Ample time is given to parents to discuss children's progress with key workers and gives them opportunity to comment on the children's life at home and share information. Consequently, the outcomes for children and their experiences are extremely positive.

Extensive resources and activities are available to promote diversity in religion, culture and gender. Diversity is promoted with enthusiasm through exciting and imaginative activities, such as the festival of Diwali and Chinese New Year. Parents are invited into the setting to share stories and songs from their own culture and children celebrate the wider world festivals with art and craft activities, cooking and topics. There is outstanding attention to the wide number of children attending from different cultural groups with lots of multicultural posters and dual language resources. Children's photographs are linked to the world map, to show their cultural home and a welcome is displayed in their home language in an attractive display of inclusive practice.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children make excellent progress in all areas of learning and development and are offered an extensive range of imaginative opportunities and activities. The highly individual and flexible approach to planning ensures that children's uniqueness is valued because planning is based on their individual interests and current developmental needs. For example, planning includes key interests and fascinations and cultural and community events that involve the children. Staff have a very secure knowledge of child development and offer the children extensive support and encouragement which enables them to be fully involved and active in their learning. Children participate in a stimulating and challenging variety of activities which include a wealth of exciting resources to investigate. Abundant resources are available for children to practise physical skills inside and outside the setting. Children show confidence in self-help skills as they put on their boots and coats for outside play. They make full use of the winter garden as they explore and investigate the icy conditions, build snowmen and make snow angels. Exciting activities happen spontaneously. For example, staff play 'peek-a-boo' around the equipment with delightful positive responses from babies, who smile and giggle as they play. Babies and toddlers are given lots of affection and support from the staff as they play on the equipment and practise physical skills. The staff model positive body language and eye contact to ensure the children are secure and happy. Children show high levels of independence, curiosity and imagination as they instigate play. For example, several children play with the garage, they push the cars and trucks up and down the ramp and organise themselves so their vehicles do not collide. Children test the different size entrances in the garage to see whether their vehicle will fit and make room for each other on the play mat. Children sort the cars into sizes and name the colours and types. Children are inspired to explore real life experiences as they play with the shop and take roles in the home corner. Children express interest and excitement as they explore the natural world through the seasons looking at growth, decay and changes to the environment. Country walks in autumn to look at changes to the trees and investigate the mini beasts in the fallen leaves, lead to children's interpretation of the season with displays of attractive paintings in autumn colours. Children plant potatoes, runner beans and carrots in containers and tyres in the garden. They often remind staff to water the plants and at harvest time they help with the preparation of the vegetables for eating.

Excellent adult support interests and absorbs the children in their chosen activity. Staff use every opportunity to extend children's language as they encourage children to name colours, shapes and numbers as they look at books and attempt puzzles. Memory books, full of children's photos are made when displays are changed, so children can relive memories of past events. Mark-making equipment for painting, colouring, chalk pictures, shopping lists, stencils and recipe cards are used freely by the children and offered in a variety of play situations. Children have some opportunities to explore tape recorders, cameras, calculators and old phones and role play includes clocks and timers and cash registers for the home corner. However, plans to provide experiences and activities designed to promote

understanding of technology are not securely in place, to provide children with the skills they need for future economic well-being. Children are gaining confidence and competence in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy as they explore a broad range of contexts, with the excellent resources freely available to them. Staff model and encourage the use of mathematical language and encourage estimation, as children count the number of pieces of fruit on their plate, and work out if they can have more.

The inspiring and attractive learning environment contains excellent resources. For example, children have access to a wonderful selection of books and written information that includes dual language books, stories about different cultures, beliefs and lifestyles and extensive information about the wider world. The setting reflects this commitment with many examples of different places of worship, festivals and the celebration of other cultures through resources, activities, topics and food. Parents share their home language with the children as they tell familiar stories such as 'the three little pigs' in Greek and Italian. Children try different world foods as parents bring in home-made contributions such as chapattis and samosas, little burgers and hummus, sweetcorn cake, and for Chinese New Year, parents brought dumplings and spring rolls for the children to try and a dragon for their display. An innovative visit to a large supermarket helped the children understand that food comes from many different countries. They explored the fishmonger's stall and remembered to wash their hands before entering the bakery section. Children thoroughly enjoyed a visit to a pizza shop. They show fascination at the process of mixing ingredients to make their own dough and then decorate the pizza with their own topping.

Children show an extremely strong sense of belonging within the setting. They are confident, settle well and develop excellent relationships at every level with adults and their peers. Children display high levels of confidence and self-esteem. They work extremely well independently, using their own initiative and are developing excellent skills in working alongside their peers. Children play a full and active role in their learning, show great curiosity and the desire to explore and are inquisitive 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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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