

Little Scholars Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	224857
Inspection date	02/02/2010
Inspector	Patricia Webb

Setting address	Randall Lines Hall of Residence, North Road, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, WV1 1RN
Telephone number	01902 322909
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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

Little Scholars Day Nursery opened in 1990. It operates from a self-contained suite of rooms situated on the ground floor of the Randall Lines Hall of Residence, and is part of Wolverhampton University Campus. The building is near the Molineux Football ground and close to Wolverhampton city centre. There is access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery serves mainly the students and staff of Wolverhampton University, although it is open to the community. The nursery is open each weekday during university term times. Sessions are from 8.30 am to 5.30 pm.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 21 children on roll in the early years age range. Older children are also cared for at times and this provision is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

There are currently five members of staff employed working directly with the children. All staff hold relevant early years qualifications ranging from Level 2 to Foundation degrees.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

All children attending this nursery are enabled to thrive in the excellent provision presented by the manager and the staff team. Each child, and their family background, is highly valued and respected as staff are exceptionally skilled in assessing children's intrinsic characters and interests in order to frame the individualised learning opportunities offered. Extremely effective partnerships with parents, providers and other agencies ensure that each child's needs are met and their protection wholly assured. The process for evaluating the impact of the provision on children's outcomes is very effective in analysing and prioritising areas for further development, embedding ambition and driving improvement. Consequently, children make significant strides in all aspects of their learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extending the free-flow provision between indoor and outdoor activity to further enhance children's spontaneous experiences for promoting their learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The highly motivated and professional team within this nursery delivers a wholly inclusive service, driven by a passion for ensuring that every child is enabled to achieve and make strong progress given their varying starting points, ages and levels of ability. Extremely strong leadership and management in the nursery drives the staff team in developing a highly stimulating and child-centred provision. The capacity for improvement has increased significantly since the last inspection bringing about major changes to practice. There is a comprehensive awareness by all the staff with regard to safeguarding children and the implementation of the very detailed policies and procedures should they have any concerns with child protection issues. Staff attend regular training in this aspect to keep abreast of changes to legislation and some procedures. Children are further safeguarded through the rigorous and very robust systems employed for the recruitment and selection of staff. All staff receive in-depth induction into the setting's policies and procedures with regular appraisals conducted to encourage staff to reflect on their practice and access additional training to extend their skills and knowledge. Stringent risk assessments are carried out on the premises and for any outings undertaken. These are monitored by the university's health and safety department, as well as the nursery management, along with accident reports to assess and identify possible areas of risk, thereby significantly minimising hazards to children.

There is a very strong emphasis on driving improvement in the nursery, involving management, staff, parents, carers and children in a collaborative approach. A recent review of the layout of parts of the nursery has resulted in some changes to how resources, equipment and activities are offered. One area has now been designated as a dining area, removing the need for children to tidy away some of their work in order to prepare for snack or meal times. Staff are also proactively working with the university on improving the overall general facilities to make them more aesthetically appealing and to extend the use of the outdoor space, contributing to the expansion of free-flow activity. Having worked with a visiting artist, the staff and the children are planning changes to make more of the art and craft resources freely accessible, further promoting spontaneous activity in this aspect. The environment is fully inclusive as the provision is laid out on ground level and children are able to lead their own play and decide what they want to do. The nursery serves a very diverse community and great care is taken to respect each family and their inherent cultural backgrounds by reflecting home languages and lifestyles through the provision of genuine artefacts, equipment and activities. The policies and procedures are inclusive and staff respond to varying community languages when using labels and displaying pictures and posters. Pictures are also used effectively to demonstrate daily routines, areas of activity and the contents of the resource boxes, enabling all children to make choices about their play. This practice is a result of staff utilising a range of strategies to ensure the nursery is a welcoming, non-threatening, stimulating and inclusive place to be, where all children and their families know they are valued because of their differences.

This level of interaction contributes to a concordant process of building very strong partnerships with parents and carers. They express their positive views of the

provision, citing the steady and stable staff team as a real strength. The way in which staff gain an in-depth insight into individual children's characters is another aspect parents value highly and one which leads to the fostering of a strong sense of trust. They speak confidently about the progress their children are making and how settled and safe they are. Accessing their child's development profile is very easy, with the children often bringing their files to parents to show them the pictures and the work they have done. In conjunction with the highly individual reports discussed at parents evenings, parents receive extensive information about their child's progress daily and are encouraged to become actively involved whenever possible. Art and craft activity sessions are offered regularly, and parents' comments indicate that they find this level of interaction most enjoyable, realising what fun children have whilst learning and developing skills for the future. Relationships with other providers, carers and various agencies involved in children's learning and development are well-established with some reciprocated in a professional manner. This leads to a consistent approach in the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for individual children easing transition into full time school and meeting specific needs where necessary.

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

All children thoroughly enjoy their time in the nursery, with many demonstrating a reluctance to leave when parents or carers arrive to collect them. They eagerly share their activities and achievements with their families, and staff have adopted routines to capitalise on this. For example, the parents' signing in register has been divided so that the parents of the older children now actively enter their child's main room and can observe more readily the level of work the children do and share their interests. Staff are very attuned to how children learn through experience and opportunity, with individualised interests being identified and built upon. They implement the Early Years Foundation Stage with enthusiasm and commitment to enabling each child to achieve to their full potential. The systems for planning, observing and assessing have recently been reviewed and evaluated to assess their efficacy. The records are now more pertinent to noting progression in each child's overall learning and development. Staff now enjoy this aspect of the practice, as planning is kept as a broad concept in order to allow for child-initiated ideas to inform this process. For example, during the recent cold weather a child discovered a large sheet of ice outside. On examining this closely, the child posed the question 'how did the leaves and bits of grass get inside the ice?' Staff reacted to this, and a prolonged and exciting activity evolved from this inquisitive child's initial question. Another child shows a real penchant for numbers and shapes, and this again is used most effectively to promote critical thinking skills, identify and recognise numbers and geometric shapes within the environment and begin to see a correlation between smaller shapes making up larger shapes.

Staff have high expectations of how and what children can learn. They use a wide and varied vocabulary, introducing words and explaining them to children, such as 'architect' and 'tessellation', broadening their experiences and knowledge. Various media are used to promote early mark-making and emergent writing skills. Some children exceed their chronological stages as they recognise and name letters seen

in their environment and write recognisable letters as part of activities, such as writing a greetings card for a relative. Following a visit to the theatre to see the play 'Going on a Bear Hunt', children have reenacted this well-loved story indoors and outside, building dens and exploring a range of emotions as they feign being scared when the 'bear with the googly eyes' pops out of the cave. This has been expanded as children have decided to make a version of the book for themselves and have added various items from the environment to represent the various areas the characters go through in the story, such as the swishy grass, the squelchy mud and the splashing water.

Children develop a strong sense of security as they are very settled and at ease. They seek out the familiar adults for comfort and reassurance, and invite them to join in their activity. Staff are very intuitive in this as they assess when to interject or when to stand back and give children opportunities to develop skills and manage relationships for themselves. Children benefit in managing their own behaviour as they respond to the very positive role models offered by staff and the sensitive encouragement in considering the needs of others. Sharing and showing care and concern are aspects ingrained in the routines of the nursery as children develop a sense of responsibility in setting the tables for lunch and being the daily helper. They care for the animals in nursery, such as the snails and the hamster, taking their roles seriously. The multi-cultural nature of the nursery enables children to develop a strong awareness of the world around them. They consider different cultures, family backgrounds and customs, and delight in making music using genuine ethnic instruments. During Black History month, children celebrated differences positively, with visitors in nursery demonstrating Jamaican cuisine using genuine ingredients. This was supported in the nursery as children have grown their own vegetables and fruit, including sweet potato, and they show wonderment at the sudden growth of the roots and shoots.

Children's health and well-being are promoted through well-practised routines and the easy accessibility of the necessary requisites for children to develop their independence in personal hygiene. They know that hand washing is important in reducing the germs in their tummies that could make them sick. Parents are aware of why detailed information is required about their children's medical and health needs and preferences in order to maintain ongoing health, and all of the required information and parental consents are in place to manage this efficiently.

Children benefit immensely from the rich, stimulating environment and the wealth of learning and development that is on offer in the nursery. Children truly are enabled to develop skills for the future, and are on their way to becoming 'little scholars', enabled by the dedicated and enthusiastic management and staff who thoroughly enjoy the role they play in children's early lives.

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	1
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	1
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	1

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