

Just Learning Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY239818
Inspection date	09/11/2010
Inspector	Susan Ennis
Setting address	White Horse Lane, Great Ashby Way, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 6NH
Telephone number	01438 365692
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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

Just Learning Nursery registered in 2002 and is one of a national chain of nurseries. It operates from purpose-built premises situated in the Great Ashby area of Stevenage in Hertfordshire. Children have access to designated rooms spread across the single level building and a secure, enclosed outside play area. The setting has two tanks with fish.

The day nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 112 children may attend the setting at any one time and there are currently 75 children on roll ranging from three months to under five years. The nursery is open each weekday throughout the year and sessions are from 7.30am to 6.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions and the nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four. The day nursery offers care to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and to those who speak English as an additional language.

The day nursery employs 16 full-time and six part-time members of staff. 19 of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications and one staff member is working towards a qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff create a very welcoming and safe environment in which all children thrive. Planning is flexible, taking into account children's likes and dislikes, enabling them to enjoy their time at the setting and make good progress in their learning and development. The staff build trusting relationships with parents and carers and keep them well informed about their child's development and the day to day running of the nursery. Senior staff lead a culture of reflective practice where all staff work together and are committed to continuous improvement for all children and families.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further the systematic use of observations and assessments to clearly identify children's progress towards the early learning goals
- develop further the use of reflective practice to identify the setting's strengths and areas for improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The knowledge and enthusiasm of the senior staff ensures that all aspects of the provision are well led. The effective implementation of the nursery's comprehensive policies and procedures support the daily running of the setting and ensure that children are offered a safe and secure environment. For example, there are robust systems in place to check that staff are suitable to work with the children and a rolling program of training further increases their childcare knowledge. Staff are also very vigilant about who the children are released to at the end of their session and do not allow anyone unknown to them to enter the nursery. Staff further protect children's safety by taking effective steps to minimise the hazards. They carry out daily safety checks of all the areas used by the children and complete comprehensive risk assessments on a regular basis. Practical procedures also ensure the children's safety when on outings. For example, all visits are risk assessed and staff carry items such as a first aid kit and the children's emergency contact numbers in case they are needed. Staff are also given designated roles in the event of an emergency ensuring that any required action can be taken quickly and efficiently.

Children's individual development is effectively promoted because the nursery has good procedures in place to support, monitor and evaluate their progress. The interesting range of resources is positively used and the inclusive, child-friendly environment is conducive to children's learning and welfare. For example, low-level storage units encourage the children to freely choose what to play with and comfortable chairs enable staff to feed and soothe babies in a more homely environment. The nursery also makes good use of the outside play areas by providing activities such as painting and sand play as well as more physical resources such as bikes and a climbing frame. Children also participate in activities within the local community such as going to the local shop to buy ingredients for cooking activities and visiting the mobile library to choose books and listen to stories.

Effective links with parents, carers and other providers positively promotes continuity of care and education for all the children. Parents are kept well informed about their child's development through, for example, being invited to consultation evenings, daily interaction with staff and access to their child's learning journal at any time. They are also encouraged to share in their child's development by recording their child's achievements from home and by taking 'Ted the Teddy' on holiday with them so that they can complete his diary to be shared with the other children on his return. They are regularly informed about the nursery's good practice and working ethos through comprehensive policies, a parent notice board and through access to the nursery website. They also participate in events linked to Christmas and any themes covered by the children including watching as the children tried to eat all the food from the Hungry Caterpillar story. Wider partnership working is encouraged as the nursery builds relationships with the other settings and schools attended by the children. They share relevant information where possible and work together to provide a consistent quality of care for all the children. For example, teachers from the local school visit the

children to introduce themselves and make the transition less daunting for all concerned.

The nursery actively promotes equality and diversity enabling them to offer a service that is inclusive for all children and their families. Staff work closely with the parents to ensure that they understand each child's background, needs and beliefs. For example, they ensure that they learn and display a few words in a child's home language to make them feel reassured and settled. Children's understanding of the world in which they live is developed as they are provided with resources such as puzzles and dressing up clothes reflecting different cultures and ways of life. They also participate in the celebrations of festivals, such as Chinese New Year when they visit the local chinese takeaway.

Staff show a genuine desire to promote the best care and outcomes for the children and are committed to sustainability. Daily monitoring of the nursery ensures that good practice is consistent and any areas for development identified. They use information from staff meetings and feedback from parents to implement changes to further improve the care they provide. For example, following parent's suggestions, a wipe board has been provided for the under twos area to inform parents about the activities that their children has enjoyed during the day. Many parents found that they did not have always have time to read the daily diary and the board could be read whilst they were waiting to collect their child. However, currently the reflective practice does not include the updating of the nursery's self-evaluation form meaning that strengths and areas for improvement are not being readily identified.

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

Children are offered interesting and stimulating opportunities to help them effectively progress and develop across all areas of learning. Information is gained from parents about children's home lives and their stage of development. This is then used to inform initial assessments and assist the staff in planning the children's next steps. Staff record children's attainments through use of observation, assessment and planning. Each child has a learning profile which highlights their progress through examples of their work, staff observations and photographs. This accompanies them as they move through the nursery and is co-ordinated by their key worker. However, as the system currently in place is not used consistently across the nursery children's development is not optimally promoted.

Children's learning is effectively encouraged through a range of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Flexible planning ensures that children's interests and spontaneous events are taken into account. For example, when children find a worm and ladybird in the garden, staff extend the learning opportunity by discussing with the children the colour of the creatures and then encouraging the children to paint their own pictures to be displayed on the wall, therefore developing their knowledge and understanding of the natural world. Older children also thoroughly enjoy making a model of a volcano following a discussion about

their aunt being unable to return from her holiday due to the ash cloud. They use a mixture of vinegar and bicarbonate of soda to make the volcano erupt and use reference books to find out more information and extend their understanding. Staff also use their knowledge to incorporate learning experiences through a range of regular activities and resources. Children actively participate in naming the day and month at registration and develop their literacy skills as they select the correct word to be displayed on the board. Staff are very supportive and encourage them to sound out and look for the first letter of the word and then praise them when they find the correct one. Children also develop their creative skills as they participate in regular 'Tiny Mite' sessions where they sing along to the songs and develop their physical skills by doing the actions. For example using plastic plates as a steering wheel and hitting them loudly when the song calls for a beep beep noise.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery, forging friendships with the staff and each other, for example, as they participate in a team game to build the tallest tower. They are encouraged by staff to work together to join their coloured stars together and to help those members of their team who need extra support developing their thought and respect for others. Their behaviour is good as they follow the positive role modelling practised by staff and learn the consequences of their actions if they display unwanted behaviour.

Children's health and welfare are actively promoted as the staff take effective steps to minimise the spread of infection and develop children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle. Children learn to wash their hands after using the toilet and take part in activities to develop their understanding. For example, staff put glitter on their own hands and by shaking hands with the children demonstrate how germs are spread. Children are encouraged to eat a healthy diet and growing vegetables in their gardening patch increases their understanding of where food comes from. They are also learning about their own safety and that of others. For example, they know to use their walking feet whilst inside and they are encouraged to think of the people who make them feel safe to develop protection of themselves.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

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	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
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