

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY412496

Inspection date

08/12/2010

Inspector

Debbie Newbury

Type of setting

Childcare on 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

Littluns Day Care registered in 2010, although it has been operating since 2007 on the childminders register. It provides day care on domestic premises, where a minimum of four people work together to deliver the childcare. It operates primarily from four purpose built rooms within the grounds of the owner's home, which is situated in a residential road in Camberley in Surrey. Other areas of the home can be used as necessary. Children have access to a fully enclosed garden for outside play, including a log cabin. The registered owner/manager, who was previously registered as a childminder, lives with her husband and three children, two of whom are adults and one is of primary school age. The setting is located within walking distance of parks and shops. There are four nursery rabbits.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register and may care for a maximum of 12 children in the early years age range at any one time, of whom not more than six may be under two. There are currently 17 children on roll, whose ages range from nine months to three years of age. Littluns operates four days a week, Monday to Thursday, from 7.30am to 6.00pm throughout the year. It closes for the period between Christmas and the New Year and for all Bank holidays. Cooked lunch and high tea are provided and the setting provides formula milk as required. Children may attend for a variety of sessions. The setting welcomes children with special educational needs, learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

A total of six practitioners, including the owner/manager, work with the children. Of these, four are qualified to NVQ Level 3, two of whom are currently studying for NVQ Level 4. There are two apprentices who work within the setting, both of whom are currently studying for an appropriate early years qualification. Littluns also employs an on site cook.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and at ease in a warm, welcoming environment and in the company of the practitioners caring for them. The setting is broadly effective in meeting their individual welfare needs and ensuring children make satisfactory gains in their learning and development. A self-evaluation has recently been completed which highlights strengths of the provision but has been less successful in ensuring all specific welfare legal requirements are met. Consequently, the capacity for continuous improvement is satisfactory. Successful partnerships are fostered with parents who are encouraged to be fully involved in all aspects of their children's care and learning.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- maintain a daily record of the names of the children looked after on the premises and their hours of attendance (Documentation) 31/12/2010
- keep written records of all medicines administered to children (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 31/12/2010

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

- review the environment to provide greater opportunities for children to independently access a broader range of resources to support child-initiated play and enable them to be more independent creative thinkers and learners
- develop use of risk assessment and arrangements for monitoring sleeping children and fire safety precautions, with particular reference to the use of the log cabin
- develop use of effective systems for monitoring and evaluating all areas of the provision and identifying priorities for development that will improve the quality of provision for all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Overall, most arrangements for safeguarding children are generally appropriate. Practitioners have a secure understanding of issues relating to child protection and the procedures they should follow in the event of any concerns about children's welfare. Some individuals have attended relevant training and appropriate reference materials, including contact numbers, are easily accessible. The premises are secure which means children cannot leave unattended and intruders cannot gain access. Practitioners carry out a daily check of the environment to ensure children's safety and further risk assessments are undertaken on a monthly and annual basis in respect of the premises and garden. These are also completed for any outings children go on. However, use of risk assessment to identify and minimise potential hazards in respect of the log cabin when this is used as a sleep room lacks attention to detail. For instance, there is no system in place for checking on the member of staff who stays with children whilst they are sleeping or for monitoring the temperature of the room so it does not get too cold and for ensuring the appropriateness of fire safety precautions. The registered person is responsible for the recruitment of any new practitioners and ensures CRB checks are obtained. Practitioners have an annual appraisal to highlight any training needs and there is some discussion about ongoing suitability.

It is evident through discussion with the registered person that she cares very

much about the day care provision she offers and is clearly committed to the ongoing development of practice. She recognises the value of training and supports practitioners in this. She has worked hard to create an inviting environment and build strong links with parents. A process of self-evaluation is in place. However, this has not been entirely successful in ensuring all requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework are met and identifying priorities for development that will improve the quality of provision for all children. On the day of inspection the provider was caring for more children than their conditions of registration allows. This is an offence unless the provider gives a reasonable excuse. On this occasion the provider did so and Ofsted does not intend to take further action. Overall, most documentation relating to day care activities is maintained appropriately. However, there are gaps in respect of some required records. Systems for recording medicines administered to children are not followed through in practice and arrangements for ensuring the attendance register is maintained accurately are not robust. These are breaches of regulations.

Everyone working at Littluns is enthusiastic and clearly enjoys being with the children. This helps ensure the happy atmosphere that is evident at this setting and contributes to the sense of security that children have. Practitioners work together as a team and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. The play rooms are bright and cheerful. All areas are nicely presented visually, with pictures and photographs, some use of labelling in the form of words associated with winter and the display of children's Christmas artwork.

The setting works in partnership with parents to gather information about children's individual needs, which contributes to continuity of care. It has resources that reflect positive images and provides children with opportunities to learn about different cultures, celebrations and traditions. In some cases, their experiences are enhanced because parents who celebrate particular festivals at home, such as Diwali, come in and contribute items associated with this to share with the children. In other cases, the registered person arranges for special visitors to come in. In instances where children hear languages other than English, information is gathered about the special names children may use, for example, for their parents or other family members, so that practitioners too may use these when talking to children. There are no children currently attending the setting with special educational needs, learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a willingness to work in partnership with parents and other agencies as necessary.

Written testimonials in the form of thank you cards and remarks noted in a 'comments book' are very positive about the setting. These views are also reiterated through feedback gained at the inspection. Littluns operates an open door policy so parents can come in as they wish. Informal exchanges of information are supplemented by a daily feedback sheet and a communication diary which goes home at the end of each week. Parents are invited to regular meetings to discuss their child's progress and to participate in social events organised throughout the year. Consequently, parents are well informed about their children and links between them and the setting are strengthened. The registered person has also introduced some quite innovative ideas for enabling parents to share in the experiences offered to their children, such as use of the internet so they can view photographs. Access to this is password protected, which

means it is only accessible to those who have the right to see it. This contributes to arrangements for safeguarding. There are currently no children attending the setting who also receive the Early Years Foundation Stage from other providers. However, the registered person displays awareness of the importance of liaising with other providers, should this be necessary, to ensure a shared approach to supporting children's care, learning and any extended support.

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

Children are at ease and settled within their surroundings and in the company of the practitioners caring for them as they are treated with warmth and affection. This helps them feel secure and supports the development of strong, trusting relationships. All practitioners treat children with kindness and respect and are ready with a cuddle, when this is needed. Each child has a 'family book' comprising of photographs of the special people in their lives. This provides a nice link with home, places value on the important people in children's lives and is a nice way of promoting some aspects of their personal, social and emotional development. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement, which helps build their self-esteem and confidence. Practitioners act as positive role-models and they intervene promptly but sensitively to guide children towards polite, cooperative behaviour. For example, they remind children about sharing and explain about the unacceptability of pushing. Consequently, children learn to appreciate the needs of their peers and the importance of treating them with kindness. Littluns organises a number of events throughout the year to raise money for different charities and children participate in these. Thus, they begin to learn about the wider world and the needs of others.

Children follow a daily routine that is planned around sleep and meal times with opportunities to play and take part in activities both indoors and in the garden. Overall, children make satisfactory gains in their learning and acquiring skills for the future. Each child is supported by a key worker who monitors their progress towards the early learning goals but everyone working at the setting knows the children well. Children are offered a variety of adult-planned activities that have regard for different areas of learning. These often link into specific themes and practitioners make use of the internet to gather ideas. They adapt activities at the point of delivery although planning does not show how these are differentiated. Also, in some instances, opportunities are missed to exploit learning and build on children's knowledge. For instance, during a cookery activity, not everyone has the opportunity to see the process from start to finish so they do not see how the mixture they stir changes when different ingredients are added. Children are able to help feed the pet rabbits, which enables them to learn about caring for living creatures and they explore some resources that incorporate basic technology. For instance, some children show understanding of the need to use the switch to turn battery operated toys on. A music and singing session is popular as evidenced by big, beaming smiles and laughter. Practitioners assist children in completing puzzles, which encourages them to use their problem solving skills. There is a tendency though for groups of children to work on the same puzzle because

practitioners only get out one at a time. They are invited to look at the completed puzzle and locate different objects and count how many they can see. Children do not regularly go on outings to explore their local community. This tends to be for specific reasons such as taking part in the 'Big Toddle' in a local park or for special events, such as going to the pantomime. There are some resources arranged to be readily accessible by children. These are particularly evident in the play room adjoining the messy play/dining area and include books, dressing up clothes and the role-play area, which is currently set up as a stable. However, children cannot access this room independently. Overall, children do not have enough opportunity to independently help themselves to a sufficiently broad range of resources and media and materials to encourage and promote child-initiated exploration and enable them to become more independent creative thinkers and learners.

Children are accommodated in a clean, well maintained environment where they start to learn about healthy lifestyles. They benefit from fresh air and opportunities for outdoor play in the garden on a daily basis, weather permitting. A variety of play equipment is provided which allows children to develop their gross motor skills and be physically active. They follow simple personal hygiene practices, such as washing their hands before eating although everyone shares a towel, which undermines the other measures that are in place to minimise the potential for the spread of infection. Children have a varied range of healthy meals and snacks that are prepared on site. Lunch looks and smells appetising and children seem to enjoy it. They are offered drinks at regular intervals throughout the day although they cannot independently help themselves to these.

Children begin to gain awareness of how to keep themselves safe through discussion and with the support and intervention of practitioners. For instance, children are encouraged to be careful as they sit on their chairs or move across the soft play blocks and they are made aware of the icy conditions in the garden and the potential dangers of this. Both children and practitioners have some opportunity to take part in fire drills to develop understanding and familiarity in the procedures they should follow in the event of it being necessary to evacuate the premises. However, these only take place twice a year.

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

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|--|---|
| How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 3 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement | 3 |

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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|--|---|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity | 3 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement | 3 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships | 3 |
| 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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| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning | 3 |
| The extent to which children feel safe | 3 |
| The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| The extent to which children make a positive contribution | 2 |
| The extent to which children develop skills for the future | 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