

Little Hands Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

Amanda Tyson

Setting address

Christ Church Scout HQ, Christ Church Road, Epsom,
Surrey, KT19 8NE

Telephone number

07768 907822

Email

hyacinthrodrigues@yahoo.co.uk

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*.

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Description of the setting

Little Hands Nursery is privately owned. It was established in 1997 and registered under its current owner in 2010. The provision operates from Christchurch Scout Headquarters, situated near to Epsom Common, Surrey. The premises are accessible to wheelchair users and have a disabled toilet. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 32 children aged from two years to the end of the early years age group at any one time. Opening times are from 8.50am until 3pm, Monday to Friday during term time. The adjacent woods and church grounds are used for outdoor play.

Six staff are employed to work with the children, in addition to the proprietor who is currently the registered manager as well. The proprietor has a BA Hons degree in early years and has been awarded Early Years Professional Status. The deputy manager is qualified to Level 3 and is committed to obtaining Level 4. Two other staff are qualified to Level 3, two are committed to completing a Level 3 qualification, and most staff hold a valid first aid certificate. There are currently 67 children on roll and this includes children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. The nursery is in receipt of nursery education funding for children aged three and four years.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy and effectively safeguarded. All requirements are met. Based on their age, ability and starting points for learning, all children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Leadership is proactive in their use of self-evaluation and are working towards establishing a more collaborative team approach. Priorities for improvement are clearly identified and mostly very well targeted. The setting is equipped with high-quality play and learning resources which are attractively presented and organized to provide an enabling environment. The organisation of the day to day operational plan is effective in meeting the needs of most children. The setting work in close partnership with parents and external agencies to meet children's individual needs. Overall, the capacity for improvement is good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the use of role-play to enable two year-olds to act out their family life experiences and to work through familiar routines, such as putting a

- 'baby' to bed
- evaluate and explore the options for establishing a permanent outdoor play area; consider the potential of the immediate woodland
- evaluate and further improve the organisation of staffing, for example to support the settling-in of new children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded. Rigorous recruitment procedures ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and suitable to work with children. Child protection training is mandatory for all staff and the 'Designated Safeguarding Officer' completes advanced training. As a result, the team's knowledge and understanding of their responsibility to monitor children's welfare and act on any concerns is highly secure. A daily risk assessment of the premises, which identifies actions, such as to unplug the laptop battery once it has charged to prevent overheating, are carried out and appropriately documented. Premises security is carefully monitored and the identity of all visitors is carefully checked. All records and documentation, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the setting are in place, sufficiently detailed and, where appropriate, shared with parents.

Play and learning resources are of high quality and in plentiful supply. Overall, the indoor environment is very enabling, well presented and organised to promote equality and diversity; to challenge children's thinking and help them to embrace differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, and culture. For most children, provision for imaginative play is excellent. Staff engage with children individually and join in their games whenever they can. This leads to dynamic play and learning. However, whilst the requirements for adult to child ratios are consistently met, staff do not always have the time to continue with such highly beneficial support. Nonetheless, additional staff are deployed to provide individual support for children with special educational needs.

Since taking over the setting, the provider has implemented a comprehensive, and well targeted, action plan for driving improvement. Children are already benefitting from the enabling indoor environment, the 'take a book home' scheme, visits from people in the community, such as the fire brigade, and from the daily walks in and around the grounds of the premises. New priorities include taking children on outings within the community, introducing a staff appraisal system, and further developing the use of observational assessments. Plans to create a secure outdoor play area though have been put on hold due to funding issues, and alternatives have yet to be fully explored. Staff work closely and very effectively with external agencies, particularly in relation to supporting children with special educational needs. Parents are provided with comprehensive information to explain the setting's regulatory and operational procedures. The weekly activity plans and topological focus for the term is prominently displayed and reinforced through regular newsletters. Parents are actively involved in supporting children's progress and development and this is very well demonstrated by the 'take a book home' scheme and the plans for children to visit a parent's allotment. Regular opportunities for parents to meet with their child's key adult provide the forum for

more in depth discussion about children's learning and development progress.

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

New children are helped to settle into nursery life through an individually tailored settling-in procedure. This includes the option of children first being visited by a member of staff who becomes their key person, and a gradual parental leaving process. However, children all start during the same week which means some key workers have more than one child to support at a time. Nonetheless, strong and trusting relationships develop between staff and children. This is epitomized by a strong sense of security, confidence and happiness which is clearly evident later in the term. Overall children are kind and considerate towards each other.

Squeals of laughter are a constant as children engage in delightful pretend and make-believe play. The block play area is transformed into anything they want it to be; most commonly an obstacle course, stage, a bus, train, or boat. Staff note children's developing interests and use this information to further extend their knowledge and understanding, for instance arrangements have been made for the local bus company to bring along a real double decker bus. Role play changes on a regular basis providing children with opportunities to act out real experiences, such as going to the hairdressers. However, whilst themes, such as 'stars in your eyes', are very popular with older children, two year-olds are not always able to relate to this. Opportunities for them to engage in basic pretend play, for example in a 'home-corner' with dolls, are not provided regularly enough. Nonetheless, they explore and experiment using their senses during water and sand play, with malleable and liquid substances, such as gloop and dough. They enjoy small world play with animals, transport vehicles, and dolls house accessories.

Children's progress and development towards the early learning goals is monitored and evaluated through the use of observational assessments, although these are still a working progress. Nonetheless, areas for further development are identified and, overall, provided for well within planning. A good example of this is the positioning of graphic resources next to the block play area, which now inspires children, particularly boys, to make purposeful marks; as they make train or bus tickets. Strong friendships emerge as children pool their ideas and inspire each other. For instance, two giant magnets are purposefully connected to facilitate a tug-of-war before children collaboratively decide to wriggle them free. Children giggle uncontrollably as they try to persuade an adult that tiny dressing up shoes will fit their feet before seriously debating if the feet are too big, or whether the shoes are too small.

Children sing rhyming and action songs with gusto and experiment with a diverse range of instruments. They enjoy listening to stories and are benefitting greatly by the use of the local library, and 'take a book home' scheme. Speech and language needs are skilfully supported through inclusive activities which incorporate fun tongue exercises. Planning provides well for the learning of phonics, numeracy, shape and colour recognition. Children are developing good technological skills.

Two year olds are learning how to navigate the computer mouse around the screen, and older children do this independently and with high levels of competence.

Children's awareness of diversity is raised as they access resources which promote positive images of ethnicity, gender and disability. They recently enjoyed a visit to the church where they learned what a font is for, and plans are in place to extend their knowledge and understanding of different faiths by visiting a mosque, and temple.

Children keep healthy and active through planned activities that encourage physical movement, such as dance, and when they play group parachute games. Occasional woodland walks bring them into contact with the natural and living world and they observe the shapes of the clouds during walks around the church grounds. However, they have yet to be given the opportunity for experiencing the woodland as a natural playground. Posters remind children about the importance of dental hygiene and hand washing. Children are well cared for if they have an accident or become unwell as most staff are trained to administer first aid. Fire safety rules are reinforced during evacuation practice and when the fire service visit. The block play area is new and very popular. Whilst the play opportunities offered here are extensive and a key feature, it is the area where more accidents, albeit minor ones, seem to occur. Children cannot resist, for example, the lure of the wood when wearing dressing up shoes because they have discovered that they can create a 'clip-clop' sound when they walk on them. Staff do step in to explain the dangers and children accept this because, rather than end their play, they suggest walking on flat planks.

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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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