

Little Owls Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

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Inspector

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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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Little Owls Nursery has been registered since 2005. It is privately owned and operates from a purpose built nursery. It is located within a small business park in Danbury, Essex. There is an enclosed garden available for outdoor play.

Little Owls Nursery is registered to care for 93 children at any one time, aged from birth until five years. The provision is registered on the Early Years register.

The nursery is open each weekday, all year round with the exception of one week at Christmas. There are currently 140 children on roll aged from six months to under five years. Opening times are from 7.30am until 6pm. There are strategies in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children learning English as an additional language.

The nursery employ 28 members of staff, including the managers, of whom 19 have appropriate early years qualifications. Several members of staff are currently training which includes training at degree level and for the Early Years Professional Status qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children experience good levels of care and attention have fun and are making good progress whilst attending the nursery. Safeguarding arrangements are good and staff have a sound understanding on how to protect children, they are vigilant within the nursery to ensure the children feel safe. Children are very settled and happily participate in a range of activities, which include some play opportunities to explore and use natural materials. Planning of activities include opportunities for children to develop their understanding of diversity, however, planning within the outdoor environment is less purposeful to enable children to initiate their own play and learning. Good systems in place enable staff to monitor and evaluate the provision, good partnership working with parents assists in this process to improve the outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop opportunities for babies and younger children to explore and experiment with natural materials
- review the organisation and planning of the indoor and outdoor learning environment to provide children with opportunities to initiate their own play and follow their own interests.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded from harm, as good procedures are in place to ensure children are cared for by staff who have completed all required suitability checks. The safeguarding policy is understood by all staff and they have a sound understanding of how to follow and support any concerns they may have with regard to the children's welfare. Most staff have completed recent safeguarding training courses to ensure they are up-to-date with current practices and have refreshed their knowledge and understanding around child protection issues. Detailed risk assessments, highlight potential hazards and how they are addressed to ensure children play in a safe environment. Good staff ratios ensure children are supervised well whilst they play. The environment in which children play is welcoming, safe and secure and provides children with good quality resources and equipment that are appropriate for the children attending. Appropriate toys are available which offer sufficient challenge to the children, however, children are less able to initiate their own play and follow their own interests in the outdoor environment as planning and routines of the day often restrict these opportunities.

Many opportunities are available to parents and carers to contribute to the decisions made within the setting that affect their children. A parent and staff committee that meets monthly is an effective way for parents to share their ideas and views, which are valued by staff. For example, suggestions made such as emailing and text messaging parent's information and updates, is now in place and ensure parents are fully informed with regard to every aspect of their child's day at nursery. Parental questionnaires that are used are also an effective way to seek parent's views. Regular newsletters, daily information sheets, parents' notice boards and prospectus ensure parents are offered information in many forms. Staff are friendly and approachable and they encourage parents to freely access their children's development records and contribute to their learning. As a result parents comment that they are very happy with every aspect of care offered to their children.

The managers and staff team are committed to ensure every child's individual needs are supported. They are skilful in identifying children who may require additional help and have good strategies in place to share information with the parents and other agencies. This ensures the outcomes for all children are good and that they progress well to meet their full potential. The managers and staff show a commitment to develop good relationships and links with local schools and pre-schools children attend. As a result information is shared and continuity of care across different settings is improved. Children are able to meet their teacher from the local primary school, as they are invited into nursery, resulting in a smooth transition into school.

The management team demonstrate a very good understanding of the importance of continued improvement. A systematic procedure that is in place, enables the managers and staff to continually evaluate their practice. They are able to effectively highlight areas for improvement to improve the children's time at the setting. For example, development of the outdoor environment has been

acknowledged as an area to improve. The team seek advice and support from outside agencies and local authority advisors to ensure the improvements made will have a positive impact for the children attending. Staff training is strongly encouraged and supported to ensure staff have the opportunity to build on their existing knowledge.

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

Qualified and informed staff have a good understanding of how children learn and the development requirements within the Early Years Foundation Stage. They have the appropriate skills to ensure children develop well and make good progress. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the initial assessment of their child, providing essential information such as the children's individual routines, likes and dislikes. Parents are also encouraged. This is achieved as parents are invited to comment on their child's continuing development within weekly information sheets that are provided. Observations made by staff and the use of photographs document the child's development and provide parents with good information and a treasured keepsake when they leave the setting. Staff are intuitive of the children in their care and are confident when documenting the children's next steps in learning.

The organisation of the space and equipment allows the children to freely access a reasonable selection of resources to support their interests. For example, defined areas such as cosy book corners are well stocked and children interested in books are able to sit comfortably whilst enjoying stories. Trolleys containing resources such as crayons, pencils and paper are readily available to encourage mark-making skills. The provision of a sensory room is a wonderful opportunity for babies and children who may require additional help, to sit quietly and listen to soothing music and watch in fascination at the lights, mobiles and visual prompts.

Children have opportunities to use technology such as a computer. They can independently use the educational programmes and have good hand-eye coordination when using the mouse. They have fun using the digital camera to document their day at nursery. Children's physical skills are developing well both indoors and outdoors. They are offered challenges such as balancing and climbing as the provision of a climbing frame, stilts and balancing bars encourage these skills. They negotiate space well as they drive around on the bicycles and scooters. They have great fun in groups using the parachute, running underneath. Children enjoy the challenge of removing conkers from one container to another using tweezers. This activity encourages children to concentrate whilst developing their fine motor skills.

Staff listen with interest to the children and ask appropriate questions to stimulate conversation. They encourage children to re-tell stories they have been looking at. They sing favourite rhyming and number songs and play with words, language and numbers. Diversity is reflected in some of the projects and resources offered. For example, children are encouraged to bring photographs of themselves and their

families from home when completing 'all about me' projects. They discuss how everyone is individual and the differences in the constructs of a family. Cultural and religious events are also incorporated within the planning. Babies and younger children are offered a good range of learning opportunities that are adapted accordingly to meet their developmental stages. They enjoy splashing in bowls of water and painting using their hands and feet. Staff are caring and attentive and good communication systems with the parents ensure their babies individual routines are supported. Although staff have an understanding of play without a purpose, limited opportunities are available for babies and younger children to explore and discover for themselves using natural materials.

Children's behaviour is good, staff gently remind them to share toys and be kind to one another. They are beginning to understand the importance of caring for the environment, as they learn about recycling, growing vegetables and caring for animals. Visits from a mobile farm offer children real life opportunities to learn about farm animals and how to care for them.

Children are able to learn about keeping themselves safe, for example, they are introduced to road safety through play experiences such as painting zebra crossings on the floor outdoors. Arranged visits from the local police officer to discuss road and personal safety issues reinforce their understanding. Visits from the fire officer help children understand the importance of fire evacuation and this is reinforced when participating in the nursery's fire drills. Children are encouraged to become independent and take care of their own personal needs. For example, when visiting the bathroom staff are on hand to assist and remind children to wash. A robust nappy changing procedure also ensures children are protected from cross-infection. Nutritious snacks and meals are offered daily. These are prepared by the nursery cook to ensure children receive a healthy balanced diet. Fresh air and exercise is supported when children play outdoors.

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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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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