

Little Ferns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY411980

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Little Ferns pre-school opened in 1995 and was re-registered under new ownership in September 2010. It operates from a scout hall, in Ewell Village, Surrey which has direct access to a secure outdoor play area, integral toilet, and kitchen facilities. The premises is accessible to wheelchair users. The pre-school operates during term time. Sessions are Monday to Friday from 9am until 12pm, with the additional option for children to attend the lunch club from 12pm until 1pm, and from 12.45pm to 2.45pm Monday and Thursday for children aged two years. Children are regularly taken on outings within the local community.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register for a maximum of 26 children, of these, none may be under 2 years at any one time.

There are currently 42 children on roll. The setting supports children who have special educational needs and /or disability, and those who speak English as an additional language. The setting is in receipt of funding for children and three and four years. A total of five staff members are employed to work with the children in addition to the provider/manager, who holds a Level 3 early years qualification, one staff member is qualified to Level 3, one is working towards a Level 3, two are qualified to Level 2 and one is unqualified, but is experienced. The setting receives support from Surrey Early Years and Childcare Services.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The provider has made, in many respects, an excellent start to her registration. Children are safe, emotionally secure, and happy. Overall, they are thriving in this stimulating and very well resourced play and learning environment. Self-evaluation is, in the main, effective. Planning for the indoor environment is a key strength and of high-quality, but planning for outdoor play has yet to be given the same attention. The provider has not met two legal requirements which both relate to record keeping. Whilst the impact on children is negligible, these are legal requirements and therefore breaches of regulation. Equality and diversity is embedded in all aspects of the provision. Partnerships with both parents and external agencies are strong and rapidly developing. Ambitious leadership, coupled with a highly enthusiastic staff team, demonstrates strong capacity for driving improvement all the way to their vision of excellence.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- keep a record of the risk assessment clearly stating when it was carried out, by whom, date of review and

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any action taken following a review or incident
(Documentation)

- keep a record of the unique reference numbers of Criminal Records Bureau disclosures obtained for each member of staff, and the date on which they were obtained; to demonstrate to Ofsted that checks have been done (Suitability of adults).

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

- evaluate and improve the use of the outdoor environment; consider activities and experiences that compliment those provided indoors; which are unique to the outdoors but which cover all areas of learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Recruitment and induction procedures are rigorously carried out; references are interrogated, qualifications are verified, and adults are vetted by the Criminal Records Bureau before they start work. Furthermore, the manager mentors staff during their probation period to ensure that they fully understand, and are able to implement, the operational policies and procedures, such as for safeguarding and managing behaviour using positive reinforcement. Children's welfare is consistently monitored through record keeping and staff are all secure in their knowledge and understanding of what to do if they are concerned about a child.

Since registration, leadership has focused almost all their energy on creating a high quality indoor play and learning environment and on building a successful team. However, not enough attention has been given to ensuring that all requirements for record keeping are met. Whilst a daily risk assessment is carried out on the premises, and for each of the off-site places that children are taken to, these are not recorded. This is a breach of regulation. Furthermore, providers are required to record specific information to verify that a Criminal Records Bureau check has been carried out on each member of staff, and this was not in place for one member of staff. Although both the provider and staff member confirm this has been carried out, it is still a breach of regulation.

The organization of the indoor play and learning environment, and the deployment of staff is excellent and further improvements are planned. Play and learning areas are beautifully presented and very well resourced. Block play, role play and the book corner inspire high levels of visitation and encourage dynamic play and sustained interest. However, whilst the outdoor area offers extensive potential this has yet to be realized. Roles and responsibilities, such as for supporting special educational needs, are delegated to individuals with the appropriate level of knowledge and expertise. Children receive very good levels of support.

The team's principled educational vision is very well demonstrated by the

successful promotion of equality and diversity. Key to this is the key-worker system, the child-led approach to planning, and the setting's proactive commitment to working in full partnership with parents to support children's individual learning journey. Communication between key-workers and parents is high. Parents are fully informed about the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enthusiastically contribute to the observational assessment process, and planning of children's next steps for learning. Parents hold the preschool in high regard and cite the high levels of communication as one of the key strengths. The setting works in close partnership with external agencies, such as speech therapists and educational psychologists, to support children's individual needs. Links are being made with local schools to support future transitions, and procedures are in place for information sharing with any other settings that children attend.

Leadership is enthusiastic and motivational and, as a result, a strong team culture of reflective practice prevails. They seek and follow the astute advice of the local authority early years consultants and teaching advisors. Good use is made of local training opportunities, and funding has been secured to enable staff to study for higher level early years qualifications. There is not yet a formal system in place for carrying out self-evaluation, but their action plan for improvement identifies astute priorities for improvement, which are then targeted effectively. Immediate priorities include completing the review and update to policies and procedures; introducing staff appraisals and monthly team meetings; and organizing more regular outings for children within the community. Although yet to be fully proven, evidence suggests this is a highly progressive setting with exciting potential. Overall, the capacity for ongoing improvement is good.

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

Children settle-in to preschool life through a gradual parent-child separation process. Arrangements for two year-olds to attend afternoon sessions, and for start dates to be staggered, allows for staff to support these young children on an individual basis. By the time they are left for their first full session, they have built a secure and trusting relationship with their key-worker. Children demonstrate a strong sense of belonging, high levels of independence, and are very happy. Throughout the session children access all areas of learning and staff are highly observant of their efforts and achievements, as well as any difficulties. They use this information well to inform the next day's planning. Based on their age, ability and starting points, children are making good overall progress towards the early learning goals.

Register time begins with a lovely welcome song which children sing with gusto before answering very confidently to their name. They help themselves to resources which add value and variation to their play, for example small figures, animals, and cars are brought to the block play area where enclosures are built for them. Children's ideas and wishes are sought and wherever possible acted upon. Equality and diversity is very well promoted and evidenced by the equal visitation of boys to the home corner and girls to block play.

Snack time is 'café style' which means children can pop in whenever they are ready once it is open; this is indicated by a green tick for open and a red cross for closed. They find their name and register their attendance at the café so that staff can monitor who has had their snack and drink and who needs a reminder to do so. All three and four year-olds recognize their name in print and many also the names of others. A member of staff is always seated here to encourage sociable conversation as well as to promote the importance of healthy eating. Similarly children are informed when the outdoor play area is open for use, which is for most of the session. Planning for outdoor play has yet to be given the attention that indoor play is, but there is plenty of space for children to engage in physically active play which helps to encourage good health. They run around and use bikes, scooters, balls, and hoops competently. Paper and pencils, sand and water are provided, but these replicate, rather than compliment, the indoor activities; the natural environment has yet to be fully exploited. Children benefit greatly from regular trips to the adjacent play-park where there is a range of challenging climbing and balancing apparatus.

Indoors, exciting play opportunities and a plentiful supply of resources means there is little for children to squabble about. They share and take turns without prompting and are consistently engaged in dynamic play for lengthy periods. When children enter the home corner, they make connections between their play and real home experiences. It is equipped with culturally and ethnically diverse resources, such as dolls, play food, and cooking utensils. They love to act out parenting roles, for example taking their babies (dolls) on picnics to the seaside. This involves much planning; relocation to the other side of the room, blankets to sit on and food to eat, carefully chosen of course. They share their real experiences and in doing so the seaside picnic changes to a caravan holiday. Then when they notice a world map on the wall they point to a country announcing 'we are here'. All this play is self-initiated but staff step in when they are needed, for instance to help lay large sheets on the ground, or to extend children's play and learning.

High levels of sustained shared thinking takes place between children, and between children and staff, in the block play area particularly. They help themselves to photographs of buildings and set about using cylinders to recreate pillars and prisms as a roof. The results are amazing. Similarly, they demonstrate their awareness of shape as they create images from their recollections or imagination, for instance a yacht using small shapes which are banged into a cork board using a hammer and tacks. They use these tools with high levels of competence showing a good awareness of safety. Road safety is reinforced when they visit places in the community and fire safety during evacuation practice.

Children frequently visit the book corner and enjoy spending time there independently as well as cosy times with staff looking at paper and electronic books. Their interest in books is further fostered through trips to the local library. They use the computer with rapidly developing skill and this is always available. The creative workshop trolley encourages children to make and create anything they want to, including props for their play, using a wide range of media and art and craft resources. Three and four year-olds use pencils to make purposeful

marks, and many can write part or all of their name.

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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